

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC
SITING AND MARITIME USES

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September 5, 2019
Start: 10:17 a.m.
Recess: 8:21 p.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: Adrienne E. Adams,
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Inez D. Barron
Peter A. Koo
I. Daneek Miller
Mark Treyger

OTHER COUNCIL MEMBERS ATTENDING:

Diana Ayala
Karen Koslowitz
Margaret Chin
Daniel Dromm
Rafael Salamanca
Stephen Levin
Donovan Richards
Barry Grodenchik
Helen Rosenthal
Venessa Gibson

OTHER COUNCIL MEMBERS ATTENDING: (CONTINUED)

Keith Powers

Jimmy Van Bramer

Rory Lancman

Brad Lander

Robert Holden

A P P E A R A N C E S

Elizabeth Glazer
Director of the Mayor's Office of Criminal
Justice

Cynthia Brann
Commissioner of the Department of Correction

Dana Kaplan
Deputy Director of the Mayor's Office of Criminal
Justice

Brenda Cooke
Chief of Staff of the Department of Corrections

Jamie Torres Springer from the Department of
Design and Construction

Julia Kerson
Director Program Management at the Office of
Deputy Mayor of Operations

Matthew Burke
DCAS

Patricia Yang, M.D.

Marco Barrios
Resident of Queens

Donna Hilton

Marvin Mayfield
Lifelong New York City Resident

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Anna Pastoressa[SP?]

Member of Just Leadership USA

Evan F. Bacardi

Marricka Scott-McFadden

Deputy Borough President of Bronx

Samanich[SP?]

Howard Kolins

Boerum Hill Association President

Alfred Brand

Chair of Kew Gardens Civic Association

Stanley Richards

Executive Vice President of the Fortune Society

Judge Jonathan Lippman

Chair of the Rikers Commission

Alethea Taylor

Former Executive Director of Greenhope Services
for Women

Herb Sturz

On behalf of the Lippman Commission

Seco Shicore[SP?]

Case manager at Bronx Connect

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Silvia Hack
Representing Queens Community Board 9
Ida Vernon
Member of Queens Residents United

Charlotte Picot
Forest Hills South

Ulene New[SP?], State Assembly Member, Assembly
District 65

Colvin Grannum
Rikers Independent Commission

Dyjuan Tatro
Fortune Society

Robert Fiske, Jr.
Lippman Commission

Vidal Guzman
Just Leadership Close Rikers

Gale Brewer
Manhattan Borough President

MJ Williams
Member of No New Jails NYC

Calamity Alexis

Patricia Ty
Represent the Lin Sing Association

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Maureen Silverman
Resident in Tribeca

Rabbi Rachel Timoner
Senior Rabbi of Congregation Beth Elohim in Park
Slope Brooklyn

Peter Samuels
In support of the plan to close Rikers Island

Kendra Clark
Associate Vice President with Exodus Transitional
Community

Darren Mack

Reverend Sharon White Harrigan. I am a member of
the Beyond Rosie's 2020 Campaign Movement

Minister Dr. Victoria A. Phillips

Reverend David F. Telfort
Pastor of the Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian
Church

Ranae Levine
Kew Gardens

Ms. Rot Ziba[SP?]
Desis Rising Up and Moving

Sandy Balbosa
Atlantic Avenue Betterment Association and
Advocacy Group

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Phillip DePaulo

Long-time activist in New York and I am a
campaign manager for Victoria Cambranes

Kay Adgadee[SP?]

Speaking on behalf of Survived and Punished New
York Chapter

Keith Francis Williams

Co-founding member of the Black Lives Matter
Global movement

Elizabeth Gaynes

President of the Osborne Association

Reverend Emma Jordan Simpson

Executive Pastor of the Concord Baptist Church of
Christ

Reverend Wendy Calderon-Payne

Executive Director of Bronx Connect

Arlene Parks

lifelong resident of the Mott Haven community

Barry Wallner

Constance Lesold

Founder of The Committee of a Hundred

Mariame Kaba

Uplift the legacy of teachers

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Craig Lewis
Bronx Connect and the RTG Program from Bronx
Connect

Matthew D'Emic
Administrative judge for criminal matters in
Kings County Supreme Court

Victor Herrera
Member of Just Leadership and the Close Rikers
Campaign

Lucas Pershing
Trinity Wall Street Church

Tamika Graham
Lifelong New York City resident

Jordan Rosenthal
Senior Associate of Policy and Advocacy at
College and Community Fellowship

Nancy Kong
Lifelong resident of Chinatown

Victoria Cambranes
Candidate for City Council in 2021, District 33

Carlyn Cowen
Chief Policy and Public Affairs Officer of the
Chinese American Planning Counsel

Matilda Wysocki
Member of Picture the Homeless

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Curtis Bell

Activist for the Catalyst Center for Health
Justice and Equity

Zachary Katznelson

Policy Director at the Lippman Commission

Akilah Tomlinson

Advocate for Just Leadership USA Close Rikers
Campaign

Stephen Freed

Resident of Chinatown

Roy Caldwood

Retired Assistant Deputy Warden from the New York
City Department of Correction

Genie Chin

Lives two blocks from jails

Richard Noel

In favor of Closing Rikers

Dipal Shah

Director of Strategic Partnerships of the Center
for Court Innovation

Shaneka Fogler

Member of Just Leadership

Yashkima Shaw[SP?]

Jay College of Criminal Justice

Veronica Echeverri
Social Worker and Career Manager at Getting Out
and Staying Out, also known as GOSO

Rose Asaf
Code Pink

Dan Swartz
No New Jails and I Walk NYC
Milo Juvinello[SP?]
Student and an organizer with No New Jails NYC

Michael Dunn
Licensed Master's Social Worker in the State of
New York

Melissa Iachan
Senior Staff Attorney in the Environmental
Justice Program at New York Lawyers for the
Public Interest

Nigel Quiroz
Policy Analyst and Attorney at the Innocence
Project

Peggy Harara
Lifelong New York City resident

Tracie Gardner
Legal Action Center

Eric Goldstein
New York City Environment Director at the Natural
Resources Defense Council

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Kiva Carmen Frank
Supports the closure of Rikers

Nasser Breanne
Undocumented immigrant from Queens

Murphy Austin
Reading the statement on behalf of Naga
Guyette[SP?]

Chi Loek
Nonprofits empowering civic engagement advancing
for the wellbeing of Asian Pacific Americans

Winston Winn
For the closing of Rikers

Insharac Mann
Vera Institute of Justice

Sy Eda[SP?]
Organizer with No New Jails

Cide Valez[SP?]

April Denoska
Fortune Society

John Jiler[SP?]

Daniel Rosario
On behalf of Gina William

Victor Huey

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Longtime resident of Chinatown

Shawn Hudson

Bernardo Sanders

Cheryl Fettick[SP?]

Opposed to the new jail being proposed for Kew Gardens and Queens

Wendy Pincus

Opposed to de Blasio's plan

June Dirk

Blue Stockings collective

Ramona Ferrara

Resident of Mitchell Houses in Mott Haven

Devante Tate

Vocal New York

Felix Guzman

Local New York

John McFarlin

Vocal New York

Herbert Murray

Just Leadership USA

Shawanna Vaughn

Director of Silent Cry

Eric Dillenburg

Walkers Street Block Association

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Micelle Seldore[SP?]
In support of closing Rikers

Brittney Williams
Supporting Close Rikers

Melissa Marrone[SP?]

Lucy Cocheen[SP?]
Community Activist supporting herself

Micelle Seldore
In support of closing Rikers

Mary Busser[SP?]
Dave Elkie[SP?]
Lives in the neighborhood of the Brooklyn
Detention Center

Rona Sugarlove
Member of Beyond Rosie's 2020 Campaign

Brian Kramer
Co-Chair of the Justice Team of the Fourth
Universalist Society

Maun Mapatra[SP?]
Member of No New Jails

Jan Lee
Neighbors United Below Canal

Savita Jashan
Member of DRUM, Desis Rising up and Moving

Allison Williams
Supports Closing Rikers

Farhana Octur
High school student from Brooklyn

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Obdule Romani
Supports Closing Rikers

Mia Soto
Community organizer at the New York Lawyers for
the Public Interest, NYLPI

Edger Aseteopan
20 years old and I am a graduate from Exalt Youth
Organization

Michael Edelman
Member of the dismantling racism team at
Congregation Beth Elohim in Park Slope Brooklyn

Sophia Gurule
Public defender in Mott Haven

Jonna Kyrie[SP?]
Suffering from domestic abuse

Dypena Chechri
DRUM

Sarang Chebon[SP?]
DRUM

Marie Fuchs
Close Rikers Campaign

Tina Tymon
In support of closing Rikers

Joe
Black Youth Project 100

Naeem Aslam
Supports Closing Rikers

Jose Saldana
Director of the Release Aging People in Prison
Campaign

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Charlie Lai
Director of Chung Pak

Nabeel Hussein
No New Jails NYC

Albasene[SP?] Gene
Supports Closing Rikers

Rosalie Henderson
Health Promotions in behavioral sciences

James Henderson
Supports Closing Rikers

Amy Tong
Teen Health Education

Matteo Tabares
Supports Closing Rikers

Alex
Supports Closing Rikers

Joslyn[SP?]
No New Jails

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING AND
 MARITIME USES

16

2 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: [GAVEL] Good morning,
3 welcome to this meeting of the Subcommittee on
4 Landmarks, Public Siting and Maritime Uses. I am
5 Council Member Adrienne Adams, the Chair of this
6 Subcommittee.

7 Before we begin, I would like to let everyone
8 know that translation services are available in
9 Spanish, Cantonese and Mandarin. Please go out of
10 the double doors if you need these services in the
11 back into the rotunda to obtain translation services
12 for this hearing. We are joined today by Council
13 Members Koo, Richards, Grodenchik, Ayala, Koslowitz,
14 Chin, Dromm, Levin, Salamanca, Van Bramer, Lancman
15 and Richards.

16 Today's hearing is on the proposed ULURP actions
17 needed to create a new borough-based jail system.
18 Approval of the ULURP applications would not only
19 facilitate the construction of four new borough-based
20 jails but would lead to the closure of the detention
21 centers at Rikers Island, the Manhattan Detention
22 Center, Brooklyn and the Vernon Bain Correctional
23 Center creating a new opportunity to transform our
24 criminal justice system.

25

2 The work to close Rikers Island has been ongoing
3 for years. It started with formerly incarcerated
4 individuals and criminal justice reform advocates
5 demanding more of us. With firsthand knowledge of
6 how inhumane and destructive Rikers Island was, they
7 set forth to make a change no one would have believed
8 possible at the time.

9 Joined by Judge Jonathan Lippman and the City
10 Council they boldly recommended that the city close
11 Rikers Island and instead build new borough-based
12 jails which were designed and operated more
13 compassionately closer to the homes of detainees, so
14 those precious social links with family and friends
15 could be maintained.

16 The Mayor, to his credit, embraced these
17 recommendations and started the public process of
18 planning and siting these new facilities. We now
19 have an opportunity to learn from the mistakes of our
20 past and plot a new course for our future, but there
21 are certainly many substantive issues left to resolve
22 first.

23 We must ensure these new buildings are able to
24 successfully integrate into their respective
25 communities accompanied with reasonable, local

2 investments. We must also make the necessary design
3 improvements, policy changes, and programmatic
4 investments to create a criminal justice system
5 focused on restoration and not punishment.

6 I recognize that there are many community-based
7 constituents and stakeholders who feel strongly about
8 this project. Through the many public hearings and
9 the ULURP process, we have already heard from
10 community residents concerned about the impact of the
11 new buildings on their quality of life. We've heard
12 from the criminal justice advocates and the formerly
13 incarcerated who understand the principles that
14 compel us to close and demolish the existing
15 correction centers, as well as those who want to
16 ensure we reform our criminal justice system and
17 treat communities that have been devastated by mass
18 incarceration with the dignity they deserve.

19 The City Council takes our role in the process
20 very, very seriously. We've been actively listening
21 to the public. To all the public feedback to date.
22 Likewise, we will be listening to you today and will
23 carefully consider all these concerns over the next
24 few weeks in the lead up to our vote.

2 The Borough Based Jail System ULURP application
3 is comprised of 13 related items or Land Use actions.
4 I will briefly describe them now. Application number
5 N 190334 ZRY is for an amendment of Article 7,
6 Chapter 4 of the Zoning Resolution in order to create
7 a citywide special permit for a borough-based jail
8 system.

9 Application number C 190336 ZMX is for an
10 amendment of the Zoning map changing from an M1-3
11 District to an M1-4/7X District and establishing a
12 Special Mixed-Use District MX-18 bounded by East
13 142nd Street, a line 100 feet southeasterly of
14 Concord Avenue, East 141st Street, and Concord Avenue
15 borough of the Bronx.

16 Application Number N 190337 ZRX is for an
17 amendment of Article XII Chapter 3 of the Zoning
18 Resolution of the City of New York, for the purpose
19 of establishing a Mixed-Use District, and modifying
20 APPENDIX F for the purpose of establishing a
21 Mandatory Inclusionary Housing area for property
22 located in the borough of the Bronx.

23 Application Number C 190338 HAX is for the
24 designation of an Urban Development Action Area.

25 Approval of an Urban Development Action Area for such

2 area and the disposition city owned property located
3 at 320 Concord Avenue and 745 E. 141st Street, Block
4 2574, p/o Lot 1 in the borough of the Bronx.

5 Application Number C 190333 PSY is for the site
6 selection of the following properties for borough-
7 based jail facilities. 745 East 141st Street, Block
8 2574 p/o Lot 1, borough of the Bronx. 275 Atlantic
9 Avenue, Block 175 Lot 1, borough of Brooklyn, 124
10 White Street Block 198 Lot 1 and 125 White Street
11 Block 167 Lot 1, borough of Manhattan and 126-02 82nd
12 Avenue, Block 9653 Lot 1, 80-25 126th Street, Block
13 9657 Lot 1 and the bed of 82nd Avenue between 126th
14 and 132nd Streets, Borough of Queens.

15 Application Number 190335 ZSX is for the grant of
16 a Special Permit pursuant to Proposed Section 74-832
17 of the Zoning Resolution to modify these regulations,
18 floor area ratio requirements, height and setback
19 requirements, permitted parking requirements and
20 loading birth requirements of the underlying zoning
21 to facilitate the construction of a borough based
22 jail facility on property located in an M1-3 District
23 at 320 Concord Avenue Block 2574 p/o Lot 1, Borough
24 of the Bronx.

2 Application Number 190339 ZSK is for the grant of
3 a Special Permit pursuant to proposed Section 74-832
4 of the Zoning Resolution to modify the floor area
5 ratio requirements of the underlying zoning in the
6 applicable special district. The height and setback
7 requirements of the underlying zoning and applicable
8 special district, the permitted parking and loading
9 birth requirements of the underlying zoning and the
10 special ground floor use and transparency
11 requirements of the applicable special district to
12 facilitate the construction of a borough-based jail
13 facility on property located at 275 Atlantic Avenue,
14 Block 175 Lot 1, and the portions of State Street
15 between Boerum Place and Smith Street proposed to be
16 demapped under a concurrent related application
17 within the special downtown Brooklyn District Borough
18 of Brooklyn.

19 Application Number C 190116 MMK is for an
20 amendment to the City Map involving the elimination,
21 discontinuance and closing of State Street between
22 Boerum Place and Smith Street above a lower limiting
23 plain and below an upper limiting plain, the
24 adjustment of grades and block dimensions
25 necessitated thereby and authorization for any

3 acquisition or disposition of real property related
4 there to in the Borough of Brooklyn.

5 Application Number C 190340 ZSM is for the grant
6 of a Special Permit pursuant to proposed section 74-
7 832 of the Zoning Resolution to modify the floor area
8 ratio requirements, height and setback requirements
9 and loading birth requirements of the underlying
10 zoning to facilitate the construction of a borough
11 based jail facility on property located at 124-125
12 White Street Block 167 Lot 1, Block 198 Lot 1 and the
13 portions of White Street between Centre Street and
14 Baxter Street proposed to be demapped under a
15 concurrent related application in the Borough of
16 Manhattan.

17 Application Number 190252 MMM is for an amendment
18 to the City Map involving the elimination,
19 discontinuance and closing of a volume of a portion
20 of White Street from Center Street to Baxter Street
21 within limiting planes, the adjustment of grades and
22 block dimensions necessitated thereby and
23 authorization for any acquisition or disposition of
24 real property related thereto Borough of Manhattan.

25 Application Number 190341 PQM is for the
acquisition of property for a borough-based jail

2 facility located at 124 White Street, Block 198 Lot 1
3 Borough of Manhattan.

4 Application Number 190342 ZSQ is for the grant of
5 a special permit pursuant to proposed Section 74-832
6 of the Zoning Resolution to modify floor area ratio
7 requirements, the height and setback requirements,
8 the permitted accessory parking requirements, the
9 permitted parking garage requirements and the loading
10 birth requirements of the underlying zoning to
11 facilitate the construction of a borough based jail
12 facility on property located at 126-02 82nd Avenue
13 aka 80 through 85 126th Street, Block 9653 Lot 1,
14 Block 9657 Lot 1 and the portion of 82nd Avenue
15 between 126th Street and 132nd Street proposed to be
16 demapped under a related concurrent application,
17 Borough of Queens.

18 Application Number 190117 MMQ is for an amendment
19 to the City Map involving the elimination,
20 discontinuance and the closing of 82nd Avenue between
21 126th Street and 132nd Street. The elimination of two
22 public places within the area bounded by Union
23 Turnpike 132nd Street Hover Avenue Queens Boulevard,
24 82nd Avenue and 126th Street, the adjustment of grades
25 and block dimensions necessitated thereby and

2 authorization for any acquisition or disposition of
3 real property related thereto Borough of Queens.

4 COUNCIL CLERK: Ladies and gentleman, can I have
5 your attention please.

6 **[INAUDIBLE 18:54-19:22]**

7 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you. We have been
8 joined by Council Member Powers. At this time, we
9 will have a statement by Chair Salamanca.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Thank you Chair Adams
11 and good morning everyone. Today, we are here to
12 discuss the administrations plans to close Rikers
13 Island and site four borough-based jails.

14 There are no shortage of horror stories about the
15 conditions on Rikers Island. Heart wrenching
16 accounts from individuals who have experienced life
17 on the Island have led us to this pivotal moment in
18 our city's history.

19 As a Council Member, I have toured the facility
20 and seen firsthand the shocking environment in which
21 people are housed. If we are ever going to have a
22 fair jail system in New York City, it starts with
23 shutting down Rikers.

24 While this objective is clear, the path in which
25 this Application has navigated has left many

2 disappointed. Following the recommendations of the
3 Commission led by Judge Lippman, the Administration
4 set out to create a jail system that was more
5 efficient for people in the system.

6 Among the policy goals laid out, siting locations
7 that were close to borough court houses and existing
8 detention complexes were necessary in order to
9 improve access to legal representation and streamline
10 transfers between jails and courts.

11 In Manhattan, Queens and Brooklyn, the city
12 fulfilled this goal. In the Bronx however, the
13 administration picked a site that is located two and
14 a half miles from the Bronx courthouse and has been
15 discussed as an area for large scale affordable
16 housing development.

17 Community stakeholders, elected officials alike,
18 immediately spoke out against this location for array
19 of reasons. Despite a pledge to have meaningful
20 community engagement that details surrounding the
21 Bronx jail has felt more like a one-sided
22 conversation strictly meant to check off a box. Even
23 after opposition from the Community Board and the
24 Borough President, the Administration continues to
25 act Bronx sites to approve a plan that would develop

2 one of the tallest buildings in the borough without
3 so much as seeing a single design concept.

4 Had the City had a better track record with the
5 South Bronx, things could have been different. In
6 the late 80's and 90's, the community found itself in
7 a similar conversation. As an answer to accommodate
8 the surging population on Rikers Island, the Dinkins
9 Administration opened up an 800-bed floating
10 detention center in Hunts Point. The Vernon C. Bain
11 Correctional Center, also known as the barge under
12 the pretense that it would be a temporary solution.
13 Twenty-seven years later, yes, twenty-seven years
14 later, in the face of an annual statistics showing, a
15 declining jail population, the barge remains an
16 operation. Casting a large shadow over the community
17 for it's own repressive legacy.

18 I have relayed this message countless times to
19 top Administration Officials and to Mayor de Blasio
20 himself. Until the city acts on it's long overdue
21 promise to close the barge, the South Bronx cannot
22 and will not accept a new jail. Where criminal
23 justice reforms meant 16- and 17-year old's would be
24 transferred out of Rikers Island as part of Raise the
25 Age, the South Bronx welcomed them to the Horizon

3 Juvenile Detention Center in my district, because it
4 was the right thing to do.

5 Given the circumstances surrounding the borough-
6 based jail application, it is clear the proposed
7 location is not the right one for the community. I
8 call on the Administration to listen to the Community
9 and do it's due diligence in exploring all siting
10 options at the location where the Bronx jail belongs,
11 near the county courthouse.

12 Furthermore, I call on the Mayor to deliver on
13 the promises predecessors have failed to accomplish
14 and sink the barge during his remaining time in
15 office.

16 Thank you, Madam Chair.

17 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you Chair Salamanca.
18 We are joined today by the applicants for the
19 borough-based jails Application who will present the
20 project. We will hear from them first and then we
21 will hear from members of the public. If you wish to
22 speak, please feel out a white speaker slip, which
23 you can obtain from the Sergeant at Arms. In order
24 to hear from as many members of the public as
25 possible, each speaker will be given two minutes to

2 testify and we ask that public please keep your
3 testimony to two minutes in length.

4 If you are not able to condense your full
5 testimony to two minutes, you may submit your full
6 testimony in writing in person here today, by giving
7 it to the Sergeant at Arms or by emailing it to
8 hearings@council.nyc.gov. Please write borough-based
9 jails in the subject line. If you choose to email
10 additional testimony.

11 Thank you in advance for your cooperation in this
12 regard, and I now call on Elizabeth Glazer and Dana
13 Kaplan from the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice
14 and Commissioner Cynthia Brann and Brenda Cooke from
15 the Department of Correction.

16 Before you begin, Council will swear you in.

17 COUNCIL CLERK: Please each raise your right hand
18 and before responding state your name into the mic
19 and your red light should be on.

20 Do you each affirm to tell the truth, the whole
21 truth and nothing but the truth in your testimony
22 before the Council today and also in response to
23 Council Member questions?

24 DANA KAPLAN: Dana Kaplan, yes.

25 ELIZABETH GLAZER: Elizabeth Glazer, yes.

2 CYNTHIA BRANN: Cynthia Brann, yes.

3 BRENDA COOKE: Brenda Cooke, yes.

4 COUNCIL CLERK: You may begin.

5 ELIZABETH GLAZER: Thank you. Good morning Chair
6 Adams and members of the Subcommittee on Landmarks,
7 Public Siting and Maritime Uses and the other members
8 of the Council who are here today.

9 My name is Elizabeth Glazer and I am the Director
10 of the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice and I thank
11 you for the opportunity to testify here today.

12 I am joined, as you noted by the Commissioner of
13 the Department of Correction, Cynthia Brann. Brenda
14 Cooke, the Chief of Staff of the Department of
15 Correction and my colleague Dana Kaplan, who is a
16 Deputy Director in my office.

17 The Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice advises
18 the Mayor on public safety strategy and together with
19 our partners inside and outside of government,
20 develops and implements policies that promote safety
21 and fairness, reduce unnecessary incarceration and
22 build strong and safe neighborhoods.

23 Today, we begin the final phase of the uniform
24 land use review procedure for the Administrations
25

3 plan to close the jails on Rikers Island and create
4 modern and humane borough-based jails.

5 It has truly taken a city to reach this point and
6 it will continue to take the commitment and work of
7 many as we build justice.

8 The leadership of the former and present City
9 Council Speaker, the local Council Members and
10 Elected Officials and the voices in driving energy of
11 those with lived experience in the justice system,
12 and the grassroot organizations around close Rikers,
13 as well as the former Chief Judge of the State of New
14 York Jonathan Lippman have all been crucial parts of
15 the journey that got us here and the city is grateful
16 for their partnership and for the fierce advocacy.

17 Our city is at a key moment; over the past five
18 years, uniquely in the nation, we have experienced
19 deep reductions in the number of people in our jails,
20 even as crime has continued to decline and the touch
21 of enforcement has lightened.

22 The work that produced these results is the
23 foundation of the smaller, safer and fairer justice
24 system that we have achieved so far and that we
25 continue to build upon.

3 Today, we have the lowest incarceration rate of
4 any big city in the nation. While fewer than half
5 the people enter Rikers today then did when the Mayor
6 took office.

7 Over the past six years, the number of people in
8 custody on any given day has fallen from
9 approximately 11,700 to 7,000. This is a long
10 distance from the almost 23,000 people that were held
11 in our jails at it's height. For us, closing the
12 jails on Rikers Island is not simply about changing
13 locations or constructing new buildings. Our goal is
14 to create buildings that stand as new models for
15 justice and they must be equally ambitious in their
16 design and function to the transformational changes
17 that have taken place and must continue to unfold in
18 the city.

19 And critically, they must provide the environment
20 to promote culture change within. Together with our
21 partners, we're working with urgency and making
22 concrete progress on this every day to meet our goal
23 of a new borough-based jail system by 2026.

24 Creating a smaller, safer, and fairer jail system
25 is a matter of justice. No one should be detained
who can safely remain in the community, but it's also

2 a practical matter. The fewer people in detention,
3 the easier it will be to create a justice system that
4 reimagines and refashions the culture and purpose of
5 our jails.

6 Based on the successful work we have already done
7 together; we believe that by 2026 we will reach our
8 goal of not more than 4,000 people in custody. Our
9 projections are based on the 25-plus year trend of
10 reductions in the jail population. The affect of
11 continues reductions and crime, shortened case
12 lengths and continued expansions of safe alternatives
13 to detention.

14 Under the new borough-based jail system, the
15 proposed new facilities would be fair, designed to
16 improve the heath, educational and social outcomes of
17 those incarcerated, promote the dignity of all who
18 are incarcerated work or enter the buildings.

19 Located in communities to increase access to
20 families, attorney's and social service providers and
21 in buildings designed to integrate into neighborhoods
22 and serve as civic assets.

23 They will be safer, designed to reduce violence
24 with improved lines of sight due to modern layouts,
25 smaller housing units and better monitoring practices

3 and they will be more efficient, better connected to
4 the rest of the justice system by improving access to
5 courts, attorney's and service providers and thus
6 reducing associated transportation costs and
7 unnecessary delays.

8 Our jails hold up a mirror to the fair
9 functioning of our justice system. We see these
10 buildings as reflecting the best of our city and of a
11 smaller, safer, and fairer system rooted in respect
12 for the dignity of all who are incarcerated and work
13 within them. Our proposed jails reflect a future
14 that we have begun to sketch with many partners; New
15 Yorkers, non-profits, community leaders, justice
16 system agencies and others.

17 This ULURP process is a vital step forward on
18 this path towards creating the safest and most humane
19 justice system possible.

20 Commissioner Brann will now deliver testimony and
21 then after the Commissioners testimony, Dana Kaplan
22 and Brenda Cooke will take you through a presentation
23 of the city's proposal and then of course, we would
24 be very happy to answer all your questions.

25 CYNTHIA BRANN: Good morning Chair Adams and
members of the Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public

2 Siting and Maritime Uses, as well as all the other
3 Council Members who are here with us this morning.
4 As you know, my name is Cynthia Brann and I am the
5 Commissioner of the Department of Correction.

6 I am pleased to be joined at the table with my
7 Chief of Staff, Brenda Cooke and the leadership from
8 the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice. All of whom
9 I have been very proud to work with in a collective
10 effort to support the creation of modern jail
11 facilities for New York City that match our modern
12 jail practices.

13 The Departments commitment to closing Rikers
14 Island and building a smaller network of modern,
15 community-based jails is rooted in an understanding
16 that all New Yorkers deserve a criminal justice
17 system that is smaller, safer and fairer. That
18 includes not only those who are detained, but also
19 their family members and loved ones, the attorney's
20 who represent them, and the dedicated staff who work
21 in the city's jails. All of whom are entitled to
22 facilities that reflect the departments modern
23 values.

24 In New York City, we are building an overall
25 justice system in which crime continues to decline.

2 Fewer people are incarcerated and more resources are
3 dedicated to supporting those who become involved
4 with the justice system.

5 At the Department of Correction, we believe that
6 a new borough-based system will deepen this
7 commitment while further ensuring that all New
8 Yorkers are treated with dignity and respect. For
9 this reason and more, I am pleased to join you this
10 morning to express the departments commitment to
11 closing Rikers and discuss the positive impact a
12 borough-based system would have on everyone living
13 and working in the department's facilities.

14 As you all know, DOC is a vast complex
15 organization. We currently operate 11 separate jail
16 facilities on and off Rikers Island, as well as two
17 hospital prison wards and court facilities in each
18 borough. In addition, we operate support services
19 divisions including our transportation division and
20 facility maintenance division. Our staff are
21 responsible for the care and custody of approximately
22 7,000 individuals every day and process over 39,000
23 admissions annually.

24 The department itself is comprised of
25 approximately 12,000 members of staff. A total which

2 does not include employees of Correctional Health
3 Services, Department of Education, Board of
4 Correction, and the Bronx District Attorney's Office,
5 all who also work in our facilities. In addition to
6 the program providers and volunteers who provide
7 services to the individuals in our care.

8 Simply put, this Department is tasked with
9 providing safe and appropriate living and working
10 spaces for thousands of individuals on a daily basis.

11 Our staff should be able to conduct their
12 important and challenging work in buildings designed
13 to enhance security and safety. Just as the
14 individuals in our care should be housed in
15 facilities that support their wellbeing and
16 rehabilitation. Unfortunately, that is not the case
17 on Rikers Island or in our borough facilities; all
18 which are woefully out of date. Our buildings are
19 decades old, have experienced significant wear and
20 tear and in many cases, have unfixable structural
21 elements that contribute to the negative impacts of
22 incarceration. These buildings have outlived their
23 usefulness.

24 Some of our facilities such as the case of
25 temporary mods installed in the 1980's, have remained

2 operational for more than 30 years beyond their
3 intended use. Keeping our facilities in the state of
4 good repair requires ongoing attention and
5 significant capital commitment, both of which take
6 time and resources away from the true purpose of the
7 department. This agency is committed to being part
8 of a 21st Century approach to criminal justice, but
9 in order to do that, we need 21st Century facilities.

10 For the department, closing Rikers is an
11 opportunity to build new modern jails that align with
12 and enhance correctional best practices.

13 Though conversations about design, our only just
14 beginning, we are working with all stakeholders to
15 ensure that new jails will be designed with enhanced
16 safety and security in mind.

17 In addition to better lines of site for our
18 officers, these facilities will localize activities
19 like recreation and programming in order to reduce
20 movement, which in turn reduces opportunity for
21 violence.

22 Localized program delivery also ensures that any
23 alarms or emergency events will disrupt services for
24 as few individuals as possible. Further, we intend
25 for our new jails to be climate controlled, ensuring

3 more humane living and working conditions for
4 everyone who steps foot into a department facility.

5 Additionally, the department has experienced
6 operating high-rise jail facilities and remains
7 confident that safety and security can be achieved in
8 the proposed new buildings. The department
9 recognizes the fundamental importance of keeping
10 individuals in custody connected to their families
11 and communities. Community connection is linked to
12 positive post incarceration outcomes and remains
13 critical to an individuals success; both in and
14 outside of the departments custody.

15 Due to the remote location of Rikers Island in
16 the cramped and narrow spaces in our borough
17 facilities, visiting a loved one in the departments
18 care is a challenging experience. New borough-based
19 facilities will not only ease the burden on families
20 and loved ones, but also enable the department to
21 create visitor spaces that welcomes the community and
22 ensures an environmental design that isn't a barrier
23 to much needed connection.

24 Over the past year, the department has been proud
25 to partner with agencies like Mock J, to listen to
the concerns of community members. We are committed

2 to being a good neighbor and I am proud that these
3 conversations have led to some positive immediate
4 changes, including a community beautification effort
5 outside of the Manhattan Detention Center.

6 Since the inception of this borough-based jail
7 plan, my staff and I have attended countless
8 community meetings and public hearings to discuss a
9 number of important questions and concerns related to
10 the borough-based facilities and the work of the
11 Department of Correction.

12 I remain consistently impressed by the passion of
13 New Yorkers and their strong commitment to their
14 communities. Our goal is to fit seamlessly into and
15 support these communities of Chinatown, Boerum Hill,
16 Mott Haven and Kew Gardens.

17 Should this plan move forward, we will continue
18 to work with all stakeholders to ensure that this
19 important dialog remains open. As I have previously
20 testified before this Council, the Department of
21 Correction takes its cultural change efforts
22 seriously and we are not waiting to move into new
23 facilities to begin this important work.

24 I am aware that there are voices in the community
25 that have suggested that the Department is incapable

2 of the kind of culture change these new facilities
3 demand and I believe it's entirely appropriate for
4 New Yorkers to question the way their jails are
5 managed. I would like to assure those who hold
6 these concerns that this is not the same department
7 as it was five years ago. We have not only reformed
8 many of our practices, but we have become national
9 leaders in forward thinking correctional practice.

10 Since 2014, we have engaged in historic reforms
11 to create a safer and more humane jail system.

12 Providing engaging programming is a key component to
13 the departments 14-point anti-violence agenda, as a
14 program engagement reduces idle time and supports
15 detainees in focusing on their future.

16 Prior to this administration, the department
17 provided an average of less than one hour a day of
18 non-school programming. Today, the department offers
19 a wide variety of programming that promotes wellness
20 and assists with successful reentry. The department
21 is also continuing its rollout of tablet-based
22 programming.

23 In May of this year, the department entered into
24 a two-year partnership with CUNY Institute for state
25 and local government to solidify the departments

2 vision for organizational culture and identify the
3 explicit goals and actions necessary to achieve it.
4 The partnership will further result in the creation
5 of robust performance metrics and a performance
6 management system which will be used to evaluate the
7 departments success in achieving our important
8 culture change goals.

9 Helping individuals maintain connections to
10 family and support networks is critical. In order to
11 combat the barriers that impede visitation, we
12 implemented a free visitor bus that provides hourly
13 transportation to and from the Island on visit days
14 from Harlem and Central Brooklyn.

15 In the first year of operation, the buses
16 provided over 75,000 free rides to and from the
17 Island. Further, we partnered with the Children's
18 Museum of Manhattan to offer mothers in custody an
19 opportunity to visit with their children at an off-
20 site location. This program has gained national
21 attention and we have been contacted by other
22 jurisdictions across the country looking to replicate
23 our model.

24 Significant reforms have been made in the use of
25 punitive segregation both by eliminating its use for

2 adolescence, young adults, those with serious mental
3 illness, and my creating program and therapeutic-
4 based housing units that offer targeted support for
5 individuals following in infraction.

6 Since 2014, the department has reduced the number
7 of individuals in punitive segregation by
8 approximately 80 percent, and we continue to be a
9 national leader in punitive segregation reform.

10 In order to ensure that everyone in our custody
11 is safely and appropriately housed, we have
12 implemented a policy of housing by gender identity.
13 We have also recently hired a director of LGBTQI
14 initiatives to support the department in providing
15 responsive programs and housing options to all
16 individuals.

17 Further, we have begun meeting bi-monthly with
18 advocates and experts on transgender policy issues in
19 order to better inform our policies and practices.

20 We are proud of these achievements over the past
21 several years and look forward to creating a new
22 system that is safer, more humane, and promotes
23 better outcomes for individuals, families and
24 communities.

2 Thank you again for the opportunity to testify
3 about the critical need for borough-based jails for
4 the City of New York and for your continued support.
5 My colleagues and I are available to answer any
6 questions.

7 DANA KAPLAN: Alright, good morning Chair Adams
8 and Members of the City Council. Thank you of course
9 for your time and attention to this critical matter.
10 I am Dana Kaplan and I will walk you through the
11 presentation and overview of the city's proposed
12 plan.

13 So, first of all, to be clear of course, the
14 purpose of what brings us here today is the closure
15 of the jails on Rikers Island as well as the closure
16 of the barge. We agree that both the jails on Rikers
17 and the barge are not emblematic of the justice
18 system that we are committed to building. And that
19 has been made clear by many of the community
20 organizations, just as involved individuals and
21 leaders in this room that have made this the clarion
22 call for New York City.

23 We are talking about moving from a system as was
24 said earlier of an eleven active city jails to four.
25 Eight active jails on Rikers Island, nine before the

3 closure of GMDC to four proposed facilities citywide.

4 This is moving from what is right now over 11,000

5 active jail beds. Over 13,000 before the closure

6 GMDC to a total system wide capacity of 4,6000.

7 So, this is a significant reduction in the

8 capacity of our city's jail systems across the board

9 and of course, we remain focused. Not just on the

10 facilities themselves, but as Commissioner Brann

11 spoke of, the continued focus on culture change,

12 reentry and community engagement.

13 The goals of this are to build a system that is

14 more fair. In terms of more humane facilities that

15 have better health, educational and social outcomes,

16 and have fewer people in them. Safer, by providing

17 smaller housing units with better lines of site that

18 are better for both people in detention and safer for

19 facility staff, and more efficient. Efficiency in

20 terms of being closer to the courts, so that people

21 are not woken up at three or four in the morning to

22 travel long distances and so that service providers,

23 attorney's and loved ones can visit their families

24 much easier or their clients.

25 It cannot be said enough the extent to which this

is an incredible reduction in the number of people in

2 detention that is historic. In early 1990's, we had
3 over 22,000 people in detention on a given day in New
4 York City. We had over 11,000 people in detention on
5 a given day when this Mayor took office. We are
6 hovering around 7,000 today and we are planning for
7 an average daily population of no more than 4,000
8 people in detention by the time these facilities are
9 open.

10 This has been not an accident, but this has been
11 the intentional work and advocacy of countless
12 individuals, nonprofit providers, the changing
13 efforts in culture within our city's courts, the
14 action of public defenders and an investment of
15 hundreds of millions of dollars from the city and to
16 programs such as supervised release in crisis
17 management programs that have helped us to drive down
18 crime as well as diverting individuals from
19 detention.

20 Obviously, this has been quite a process to get
21 us here to date. I just want to highlight some of
22 the key changes that have been made in this plan
23 before I go through the different sites.

24 So, the changes that have been made to this plan
25 to date is that, we are proposing a smaller system

2 overall. One is a result of bail reform; we have
3 updated what were our initial projections of an
4 average daily population of 5,000 individuals to an
5 average daily population of a thousand fewer people.

6 We have also made a change to reflect a smaller
7 inefficiency rate. So, we are planning for about a
8 15 percent swing space consideration. These changes
9 have been one of the factors that have already
10 reduced the height of the proposed facilities and the
11 proposed maximum envelope as well as the density of
12 our application.

13 In response to feedback that we received from
14 both justice organizations and from neighborhoods, we
15 have made some changes to the plan including removing
16 the proposed arraignment court from the Bronx
17 facility, removing the centralized special medical
18 annex from the Queens facility and in response to the
19 direct feedback that we received from countless
20 different women service organizations and focus
21 groups with formerly incarcerated women, staff, and
22 families of women in detention, we are proposing to
23 centralize the women in one location at the Queens
24 site to allow their own dedicated intake and visiting
25 spaces. And finally, as a result of design build, we

2 now believe that all of this is possible on a shorter
3 timeline then initially anticipated, by June 2026 or
4 a total of nine years from when we first announced
5 our commitment to close the jails on Rikers Island.

6 I will turn to Brenda Cooke, who will walk us
7 through what the building blocks are of the program
8 that comprised the square footage that we are seeking
9 approval for at each facility.

10 BRENDA COOKE: Good morning. What's depicted on
11 the slide in front of you is a rendering of a
12 proposed housing unit in one of these new borough-
13 based jail facilities.

14 Some key components of modern jail design; in
15 particular, I would highlight the smaller size of the
16 housing unit. So, the maximum living capacity would
17 be smaller than most of our housing units in our
18 outdated existing department facilities.

19 The layout as the Commissioner mentioned and
20 Director Glazer as well, has improved site lines
21 unrestricted views for those officers who are
22 responsible for the safety and supervision of those
23 living in the unit providing services and programs in
24 the space on the unit.

3 A specific highlight as well is the direct access
4 to outdoor recreation space for each and every
5 housing unit in these modern new facilities. This is
6 important and an important distinction both as to the
7 humanity, dignity and supportive environment, for
8 both those living and working in these facilities.

9 We presently have at our facilities, one primary main
10 outdoor recreation yard that has to be managed on a
11 schedule to accommodate each persons opportunity for
12 an hour in outdoor each day. These directly adjacent
13 recreation yards with direct supervision would allow
14 free access for everyone for the duration of the day.

15 There is also increased spaces provided for the
16 delivery of tailored programming, education services,
17 space for tele visit and other meetings with clinical
18 or medical providers. The day rooms and the cells on
19 the unit will have direct access to light, sunlight
20 and be bright and spacious.

21 With respect to what's driving the height and
22 then therefore the density of the facilities that we
23 are proposing as part of this ULURP application is
24 the component parts that were represented therein.

25 And on this slide, you can see a distribution of the
approximate allocation of square feet per bed and

2 each of these facilities as Dana mentioned, is
3 proposed for 1,150 beds. And so, the largest
4 allocation of square feet for each of those available
5 beds is dedicated to the residents program, which
6 includes things like education space, classrooms,
7 other program space for hard and soft skills
8 learning, library, the commissary, gym, chapels and
9 mosques.

10 There is additionally more than sufficient and
11 more than our current facilities allocation of space
12 for the residence for their housing units, for
13 processes of new admissions into the facility that
14 are humane and dignified. And they provide special
15 populations in our care, more right sized housing
16 units. They are smaller and available to provide
17 therapeutic services.

18 Also, what's unique about the facilities in some
19 respect that we are proposing here for New York City,
20 in order to meet the goals of our justice reform are
21 things like the health services in the community
22 space and the space in the lobbies and visitor and
23 public spaces in the facilities. For people who have
24 been by one of our borough facilities or visited any
25 of our borough or department facilities on Rikers

2 Island, as the Commissioner identified, our visiting
3 spaces are insufficient for supporting the
4 connections that we know are so important to maintain
5 while in custody to have a successful reentry upon
6 exit.

7 The proposed visiting spaces in these facilities
8 will be spacious, support specific places for
9 families and children to visit with those in
10 detention. There will be spaces in the lobby, for
11 those who have come to pay bail or have an inquiry or
12 want to connect with a service provider or greet a
13 loved one or family member or friend who is exiting
14 the facility.

15 All of these building blocks contribute to the
16 ULURP application and the size and density that's
17 been proposed as the maximum envelope for this
18 application.

19 DANA KAPLAN: So, as Brenda outlined what the
20 program is and the building blocks of each facility,
21 I thought it would be helpful to just share a little
22 bit about what the process was by which we developed
23 these building blocks.

24 So, first of all, as I acknowledged in the
25 beginning, when we began this effort to develop the

3 plan for the closure of Rikers Island, we also
4 obviously considered the work that had been done to
5 date, the work of the Lippman Commission and the
6 justice design efforts, as well as the pass reform
7 efforts that the Mayor's Office itself had been
8 underway with.

9 We formed a justice implementation task force
10 with three different working groups focused on
11 design, culture change and reducing the jail
12 population. The design and culture change working
13 groups work with us to develop a set of design
14 principles that form the basis of this master plan.
15 We have done pure reviews with both correctional and
16 non-correctional architectural and design experts to
17 give input into our considerations for the components
18 of this program. We've done focus groups with
19 formerly incarcerated individuals, service providers,
20 facility staff, public defenders, met with district
21 attorney's, local elected officials, the Board of
22 Correction, all in order to understand how we could
23 build a justice system that is fundamentally
24 different than the one that we have today. And we
25 developed a set of four neighborhood advisory
council's or committees in each of the neighborhoods

2 and boroughs of the proposed facilities to give us
3 guidelines, or develop a set of guidelines and
4 recommendations, guidelines and principles on things
5 including facility design, integration with the
6 neighborhood, as well as other community needs.

7 We've had onsite tours with neighbors around this
8 proposed facilities, small group meetings, and of
9 course, a number of public hearings and open forums.

10 When we looked at developing the proposed
11 facilities, we considered some primary criteria for
12 how we would select these sites. The primary
13 criteria was that they would be close to the
14 courthouse, city owned property, transit accessible,
15 and sufficient site area. These are the criteria
16 that allow us to close Rikers Island as quickly as
17 possible. To ensure that we have proximity to the
18 courthouse, and so that attorney's, service providers
19 and loved ones can use public transportation to visit
20 people in detention and shift sufficient site area to
21 be able to provide the program.

22 In three of the four boroughs, we were able to
23 meet these criteria where there are existing DOC
24 facilities. In Manhattan and Brooklyn, of course,
25 the existing open Brooklyn House of Detention and

2 Manhattan Detention Center. In Queens, the side of
3 the closed Queen's Detention facility, which is open
4 for court production but no longer houses people for
5 overnight detention. In the Bronx, it was a more
6 complicated site selection process because the
7 current DOC facility is of course the barge, and we
8 do not believe that a floating boat is the
9 appropriate site for a criminal justice reform plan,
10 nor is it close to public transportation.

11 So, in the Bronx in particular, we had to look at
12 a number of different sites before we determined that
13 the site of the current NYPD tow pound is the most
14 viable. I will walk you through each of the four
15 locations.

16 So, in Brooklyn, as I said, we are proposing to
17 demolish the current Brooklyn House of Detention and
18 build a new facility that would have housing support
19 services, localized medical care, retail and
20 community facility space. It's of course at the
21 intersection of the Boerum Place Civic corridor and
22 the Atlantic Avenue commercial corridor. This is the
23 access diagram; the ground floor at Atlantic Avenue
24 and the southern part of Smith Street is proposed to
25 be occupied by community define uses to provide an

2 active street frontage along these corridors. The
3 public entrance would be located on Boerum Place, the
4 boroughs main civic corridor. Staff entrance and
5 loading would be on State Street, which is where
6 these functions are currently located, and vehicle
7 parking would be located on Smith street.

8 I should note that one of the things that we've
9 heard consistently across neighborhoods is the
10 important of providing below grade parking to the
11 greatest extent possible, in order to address the use
12 of existing street parking by DOC, our staff
13 vehicles. And so, that is something that we have
14 accommodated at each of the locations.

15 This is just an illustrative building slide that
16 shows that the podium base of the buildings has the
17 overall shared building support, such as community
18 space, public lobby, mechanical systems, visiting
19 intake, kitchen, locker rooms, parking, gymnasium,
20 etc. And then, the housing units are provided above.

21 As an illustrative rendering of well, we don't
22 have the exact designs for this facility or the other
23 facilities because this is a design build project.
24 This is illustrative rendering that demonstrates the
25 extent to which the vision is to have a more active

2 pedestrian experience and less of the kind of wall
3 that one experiences right now with the Brooklyn
4 House of Detention.

5 In the Bronx, as I noted, we had to look at
6 number of different locations before determining that
7 the most viable site would be the site of the current
8 NYPD Tow Pound.

9 So, as you can see, the site of the current NYPD
10 Tow Pound is abutted on one side by the Bruckner
11 Expressway and on the other side by a more
12 residential neighborhood. What we are proposing to
13 do in this site in particular, is to develop the
14 detention facility on the site that is adjacent to
15 the Bruckner Boulevard, and then separated by a
16 service corridor provided for a mixed-use affordable
17 housing development, which we understand to be a
18 community identified need. And which will ensure
19 that for the residence on that side of Concord
20 Avenue, what they are facing is a housing developing.

21 Again, an illustrative representation of the
22 building, and then of course, the mixed-use housing
23 development opportunity on Concord Avenue, which we
24 anticipate will provide approximately 235 residential
25 units and which will be an HPD project.

2 In Manhattan, we are proposing to demolish and
3 replace the existing Manhattan Detention Center on
4 124 and 125 White Street and replace this with a
5 detention facility that will maintain a pedestrian
6 access on the White Street Arcade. That on both
7 sides will have community determined uses. The
8 intention is to provide pedestrian experience without
9 the street parking or vehicular access that is
10 currently provided. And this is something that we
11 have heard is a top priority of the community.

12 Again, the illustrative building. That is an
13 illustrative rendering of the Arcade through White
14 Street and more visuals.

15 And finally, on the Queens site, we are proposing
16 the demolition and replacement of the Queens
17 Detention Facility. Specifically, we are proposing
18 to use the footprint of the existing detention
19 facility as well as part of what is an adjacent
20 municipal surface parking lot. The intention is to
21 use part of the footprint for both the proposed
22 facility and then, build a surface multilevel parking
23 lot, that would actually provide more parking spaces
24 to the neighborhood than what is currently provide.

3 Because we have heard that parking in itself, is a
4 key concern for the Queens neighborhoods.

5 At the Queen's facility site in particular, what
6 we are proposing is that there would be both the
7 men's facility as well as a women's detention
8 facility. As I mentioned earlier on, we got a
9 significant amount of feedback from different women's
10 organizations, that it was the most appropriate model
11 of care to have one centralized women's facility. We
12 are proposing that for the Queens site, because it is
13 both where we had planned the maternity and nursery
14 units, where we can provide dedicated female only
15 intake, visiting, programming, recreational services.
16 We had heard that that was a key concern and where
17 it's also located near Elmhurst, where women in DOC
18 custody who require elevated medical care are
19 currently taken. Again, the building representation
20 and then a rendering of what could be possible post
21 design.

22 The ULURP action themselves, that we are seeking
23 approval for. Chair Adams already read through them,
24 but just at the high level, we are seeking approval
25 for both systemwide actions, site selection for
26 borough based jails, a text amendment to create a

2 borough based jail system special permit, as well as
3 specific actions for each site, which are listed here
4 and we can speak to and address any questions you
5 have.

6 And finally, looking ahead, where we are in the
7 process. So, obviously, we are in the final stage of
8 ULURP approval after a process that has been long,
9 intensive, and certainly began long before this
10 process even began in terms of the decades long call
11 perhaps for the closure of Rikers Island.

12 Assuming passage of this ULURP application, we
13 will be able to begin the procurement process for RFQ
14 and four RFP's to design and construct the four
15 design build projects to put us on a timeline of
16 completion by 2026. There will be many opportunities
17 for continued design review, which we can speak to,
18 but we can just at highest level, will note that
19 there will be ongoing updates to the Planning
20 Commission, the Public Design Commission and
21 continued community engagement.

22 We understand that this is a serious and
23 incredibly important endeavor for the City of New
24 York. This is an historic opportunity and a moment
25 in which we have incredible responsibility to get

2 this right. We have been benefitted greatly from the
3 last several months of engagement that we have done
4 with people in this room and beyond to understand
5 what the key concerns and considerations are. That
6 can make sure that when we close the jails on Rikers
7 Island, we can do so with confidence that we are both
8 building a better justice system and ensuring strong
9 and vibrant neighborhoods. We are committed to
10 continuing this process moving forward and look
11 forward to working with you, Members of the Council,
12 to make sure that we make this the best possible
13 plan. As well as people in this room and outside of
14 its doors to take seriously our responsibility to
15 build a better justice system for all of New York.

16 Thank you so much for your time this morning and
17 we are happy to answer any questions, as well as we
18 have a number of different members of the
19 Administration and City agencies who are here, who I
20 will help call up to speak specifically to questions
21 that you all might have.

22 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you very much for your
23 testimony, your thorough testimony, all of you this
24 morning. We are very grateful to have you here and
25

2 provide us with such a detailed explanation and
3 history.

4 This is an extremely critical endeavor for the
5 City of New York. Before I yield to Chair Salamanca
6 and other colleagues for questions, I do have a
7 couple. First, I would like to acknowledge we have
8 been joined by Council Members Gibson and Lander.

9 Can you help us to understand your timeframe for
10 closing Rikers and building the new facilities?

11 DANA KAPLAN: I would like to invite up Deputy
12 Commissioner Jamie Torres Springer from the
13 Department of Design and Construction who can speak
14 to the specific schedule.

15 JAMIE TORRES SPRINGER: Thank you Dana. Good
16 morning Council Members. Chair, thanks for your
17 question. So, the Department of Design and
18 Construction will be responsible for delivery of the
19 borough-based facilities working very closely with
20 the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice and the
21 Department of Corrections.

22 We are working in anticipation of a potential
23 ULURP approval. We are working on a full program
24 management plan for the delivery of the facilities.
25 We're in the process of developing that and will

2 provide updates as we go. I can certainly say the
3 major milestone is the completion of the four
4 borough-based facilities for beneficial occupancy in
5 2026 and the closure of Rikers and the barge at that
6 time.

7 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you very much and we
8 have been joined by Council Member Inez Barron. At
9 what rate do you expect the population to decrease?

10 ELIZABETH GLAZER: So, we are projecting right
11 now that there will be no more than 4,000 people in
12 custody in 2026. This is obviously a projection and
13 there are a lot of very dynamic moments in the
14 criminal justice system with bail reform that will be
15 implemented in January of this coming year. So, that
16 number could well go down. Right now, we think it
17 will be around 4,000.

18 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Okay, with that reduction,
19 when are the existing facilities due to come offline
20 and new facilities constructed?

21 **BRENDA COOKE:** Thank you for that question, so,
22 as Dana mentioned earlier in connection with our
23 current population reduction, the Department of
24 Correction is committed to both decommissioning
25 entire facilities or portions of facilities in

2 recognition of a reduced population. And so, we plan
3 to be responsive to our population reduction and
4 downsize the size of the footprint of either the
5 existing facilities in whole or in part between now
6 and 2026.

7 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Okay, we're going to take a
8 look at the timeframe, where we know that some say
9 it's too little, some say it's an extended amount of
10 time. Looking at DOC for a second, what are the
11 Department of Corrections current staffing levels?

12 CYNTHIA BRANN: We have approximately 10,000
13 uniform staff and 2,000 civilian staff.

14 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: And what is the Department of
15 Corrections staffing plan for the new borough-based
16 jail facilities?

17 CYNTHIA BRANN: So, since we don't have an
18 interior design for these buildings, we don't have a
19 staffing plan as of yet, because we don't know how
20 the inside of the housing units will look. But
21 because of the efficiencies that we will have in
22 these buildings, the staffing will be reduced.

23 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: How are you currently
24 preparing the staff for the reduction, or are you

2 currently preparing the staff at DOC for the
3 reduction?

4 CYNTHIA BRANN: So, we have gotten confirmation
5 from the city that we will not be experiencing
6 layoffs to staff. As our population reduces, we will
7 be downsizing our staff through attrition.

8 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: How are you informing the
9 staff?

10 CYNTHIA BRANN: So, we have open forums with our
11 staff. The wardens and the uniform leadership as
12 well as the non-uniform leadership have been speaking
13 about this. It's been in the news, staff have asked
14 questions, we have given them the assurance that
15 there will be no layoffs. We have had conversations
16 with the Union leaders as well.

17 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Along those same lines
18 Commissioner, what type of feedback are you getting
19 from those discussions?

20 CYNTHIA BRANN: It's mixed. Some people can't
21 see 2026-2027 in the future. It's hard for them to
22 imagine that, they want to be assured that they will
23 have a job with the reduction in population and in
24 smaller more humane, safer jail system. So, we are
25 doing our best to assure them of that.

2 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Alright, thank you. Along
3 different lines, what kinds of investments will you
4 make to prevent or divert people from the Criminal
5 Justice system or reinvest in communities that have
6 been devastated by mass incarceration?

7 ELIZABETH GLAZER: So, we are building right now
8 on what has been quite a strong foundation of
9 investment to ensure that people don't go into the
10 justice system period. And that, when they come out
11 that they have the full supports that they will need.

12 We anticipate that as we move forward, especially
13 with bail reform, that we will be looking at and
14 expanding those supports, so supervised release,
15 which has given judges – has probably driven about
16 half of our reduction in our jail population. Has
17 given judges an opportunity between jail and nothing
18 at all. And that's been very enthusiastically
19 supported by the judges, by defenders, and by
20 prosecutors and we anticipate that that will continue
21 to expand as we move forward.

22 We also have put big investments into efforts
23 that really kind of civilianize the way in which we
24 look at safety. So, big investments in things like
25 the Crisis Management System, Neighborhood CompStat,

2 that really builds neighborhood supports for reducing
3 violence before it even happens. We think that's a
4 very, very important part of our future planning.

5 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: I would agree. My last
6 question before I yield to my colleagues has to do
7 with, he cost. And it's been spoken about at great
8 length, the expense of this project.

9 The Administration estimated the total cost of
10 construction for four borough-based jails for a
11 population of 6,000 people to be \$8.7 billion. Now
12 that the population has been reduced to 4,000, what
13 is the updated estimated cost of construction?

14 JAMIE TORRES SPRINGER: I will answer that
15 Council Member. We are sticking with that estimate
16 based on a lot of work left to do. As we move
17 through the design process, which I am happy to talk
18 about in more detail, we will provide updated
19 estimates as we move along at the key milestones.

20 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Is there any particular
21 reason why that figure remains the same if the
22 population is decreased?

23 JAMIE TORRES SPRINGER: The estimate for that
24 budget is based on the place that we're at and it

2 would make sense for us to carry enough contingency
3 as we move into design as we refine those designs.

4 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Okay, thank you. I am sure
5 my colleagues will expand a little bit more on that
6 subject. So, I am going to yield to Chair Salamanca
7 for questions.

8 COUNCIL CLERK: I neglected to swear in one of
9 our panelists answering questions. So, please state
10 your name and do you affirm that the testimony you
11 have given and that you will give in response to
12 Council Member questions will be truthful?

13 JAMIE TORRES SPRINGER: Jamie Torres Springer, I
14 do.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Thank you. Thank you,
16 Chair Adams. So, I have a few questions. My
17 question is going to be focused on the Bronx location
18 and I also have some questions on the barge at Vernon
19 C. Bain Center.

20 My first line of question, in terms of besides a
21 tow pound, what other locations did the City consider
22 for Bronx site?

23 DANA KAPLAN: So, we looked at a number of
24 different locations, obviously one of the locations
25 that we looked at was the site that was closer to the

2 courthouse, so, the Sherman Avenue location. We
3 looked at not just the site of the surface parking on
4 Sherman Avenue but also another parking lot there in
5 the underutilized section of the existing family
6 court or the family court annex.

7 So, the challenge with that site in particular is
8 that those are three not exactly contiguous
9 locations. They are not all city owned, but beyond
10 that, it was almost an awkward zigzag configuration,
11 which would have had real challenges in terms of
12 lines of site, transport and staff safety within the
13 building. There would have been challenges in terms
14 of providing direct light into the facility and it's
15 a smaller square footage. So, it would have been
16 about twice the size or twice the height as the
17 proposed location.

18 So, that is the other site that we did look at
19 seriously and those were really the constraints that
20 we faced in that location.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: When you mention about
22 not all the sites or the lots were city owned land,
23 you are referring to they are owned by the state
24 correct?

25 DANA KAPLAN: Correct.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Did the City approach
3 the State to ask for permission or ask for a transfer
4 of the lots? Was that ever considered?

5 DANA KAPLAN: I want to be very clear that there
6 were challenges with that site, in terms of the
7 square footage itself and the configuration of those
8 sites. And so, there were some fundamental concerns
9 with the viability that prevented us from moving
10 forward.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Did the city consider
12 any other city owned sites?

13 DANA KAPLAN: Yes, we looked at a number of
14 different city owned sites and you know, as you know,
15 Council Member, we've had these conversations with a
16 number of other Bronx elected officials and there
17 were sites that were certainly much farther. There
18 were a number of different issues. It was a more
19 complex site selection process, just given the fact
20 that there was no existing DOC facility that provided
21 that direct court access as we had in the other
22 boroughs. So, we did look at a number of different
23 sites and believe that the site of the proposed
24 facility is the most viable location.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Did the city consider
3 community feedback when selecting this location?

4 DANA KAPLAN: So, there were a number of
5 different inputs into this decision. Obviously, this
6 was a decision that was made at the highest level and
7 the Mayor had a number of different conversations on
8 this. We certainly considered a number of different
9 perspectives. The criteria across the board has been
10 consistent in that we were looking for sites that
11 were accessible to public transportation, city owned,
12 had that relative proximity to the courthouse as much
13 as possible and sufficient square footage.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: But did the city speak
15 to the community before deciding that you were going
16 to pick this site.

17 DANA KAPLAN: So, I just want to say, this was
18 not a decision that was taken lightly. It was a
19 decision that was made by the highest members of the
20 Administration and you know, we believe that this is
21 the most viable location. Obviously, we take
22 seriously the community feedback that we are
23 receiving on this and are committed to working with
24 the Council, with members of the Bronx community,
25 members of the neighborhood advisory council and

2 committee to understand what their concerns are and
3 address them as best we can.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: You do understand the
5 community input is before you make a decision. Once
6 you make a decision, you're basically just telling
7 us, this is what we're going to do.

8 Alright, I will move on to my questions here.
9 The barge; that's located in my district. You do
10 understand that should this plan pass and I don't
11 know what your order of building these new borough-
12 based jails, what the order is, but should the Bronx
13 be first, there will be three jails in a three-mile
14 radius in the south Bronx. We have the Horizon
15 Detention Center, which is in my district. Then a
16 mile south, you would have this new Bronx jail, and a
17 mile south from that, you have the Vernon C. Bain
18 Center. The barge, the boat, you know, it came in
19 1992. David Dinkins was Mayor then and the reason
20 that they brought in the barge was because of the
21 overflow of detainee's in Rikers Island. It closed
22 in 1995 because there was a reduction in detainee's
23 in Rikers Island, but once again, it opened up again
24 in 1998 and has been open ever since.

2 I know that the numbers of detainee's in Rikers
3 have decreased dramatically, why is the barge still
4 open?

5 DANA KAPLAN: So, I will kind of open and speak
6 to the issue and then perhaps the Department of
7 Corrections can speak more specifically about the
8 current use of the barge.

9 One, I just want to acknowledge Council Member
10 Salamanca, your concerns and perspective on this and
11 we take seriously obviously the stated commitment
12 that we also want to see the barge closed as part of
13 this project and to not have that be a continued
14 vestige of what was exactly as you said, not intended
15 to be a permanent solution and not representative of
16 what we feel is the right justice system. We are of
17 course working through what the timeline and phasing
18 and sequencing is of the entire program, in terms of
19 how we can bring the existing borough facilities
20 offline and the Department of Corrections can speak
21 to exactly what the considerations are in regard to
22 the barge specifically.

23 BRENDA COOKE: Thank you. So, thank you for your
24 question and what we are considering as our
25 population has been decreasing are the number and

2 locations of the facilities that are necessary. A
3 number of the existing facilities on Rikers Island
4 had portions of facilities over the past, as our
5 population has decreased dramatically since even as
6 Director Glazer and Director Kaplan mentioned from a
7 tight in 1991. We had temporary structures, modular
8 buildings that accommodated many of those additional
9 beds that no longer exist.

10 With respect to the size of our current capacity
11 and our beds presently in light of our current
12 population, we are evaluating the physical plants of
13 each of our existing facilities, the nature of the
14 housing dynamic that available at those facilities,
15 whether or not it's celled units or dormitory space.
16 The types of risk, classification that those housing
17 units can accommodate. The other infrastructure
18 issues with respect to you know, mechanical, the
19 roofs, all of these things. The efficiencies with
20 which we can run it from a staffing perspective and
21 so, all of those considerations are underway. Those
22 are the considerations that led us to close GMDC a
23 year ago. That led us to take a number of more than
24 500 decommission from more than 500 beds earlier this
25 year and we will continue to guide our discussions

2 about which areas of which facilities in which entire
3 facilities will come offline and when.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: I still don't
5 understand why the barge is still open.

6 BRENDA COOKE: Based on the considerations I just
7 outlined; the Department will be evaluating all of
8 our facilities under those circumstances in light of
9 the population daily census.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: So, as part of this -
11 my understanding is these borough-based jails is a
12 ten-year plan, correct? Or nine-year plan?

13 BRENDA COOKE: Yeah.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: And within that nine-
15 or ten-year plan, within this current plan, when is
16 the barge scheduled to be closed?

17 DANA KAPLAN: So, we know that by the end of
18 2026, we will be able to close all of the jails on
19 Rikers and the barge. In terms of the specific
20 sequencing of bringing offline the existing borough
21 facilities and then opening new borough facilities,
22 that is a timeline that is still being developed.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: The detainee's that
24 you have there, it is my understanding in having
25 conversations with you, you mentioned that the

2 detainee's that you have there are for health-related
3 issues?

4 BRENDA COOKE: No, I think - I believe what you
5 are referring to is our conversation about air
6 conditioning specifically. And so, the Vernon C.
7 Bain Center, the barge and the Manhattan Detention
8 Complex are the only two facilities out of the
9 Departments eleven facilities that are fully air
10 conditioned. And so, with respect to the medical
11 designation of heat sensitivity and the climate-
12 controlled environment that those individuals
13 require, there are a number of folks yes, that are
14 housed at the Vernon C. Bain center that are
15 medically designated as heat sensitive by
16 Correctional Health.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Madam Chair, I just
18 have two more questions and I will wrap up. The
19 detainee's that you have in the barge right now, are
20 they waiting for sentencing or have they been
21 sentenced already, and they are waiting to be
22 transferred out to state facilities?

23 BRENDA COOKE: So, almost nearly 90 percent, 85
24 to 90 percent of our population are pre-trial
25 detainee's. And so, Vernon C. Bain Center, the

2 barge, is also a new admission facility for anyone
3 coming into custody from Bronx courts. And so, the
4 bulk of those that are housed at the Vernon C. Bain
5 Center are detainee's. At each of our facilities, we
6 have a small number, usually a single housing unit of
7 individuals who are sentenced and serving out a city
8 sentence of a year or less in order to work in
9 certain employment and job throughout the department
10 and necessary functions. So, the bulk of those at
11 Vernon C. Bain, like the rest of our Department are
12 pre-trial detainee's.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Alright, and finally,
14 you do understand that the barge is an annex of
15 Rikers Island. The horrors that happen at Rikers
16 Island are also happening in the barge and I find
17 that a ten-year plan to shut down the barge is
18 irresponsible and unacceptable. If this Mayor is
19 really serious about shutting down Rikers, he can
20 start with the annex of Rikers Island and shut down
21 the barge.

22 Thank you, Madam Chair.

23 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you Chair Salamanca.
24 We are now going to have questions in this order.
25 Council Members Ayala, Chin, Koslowitz and Levin. We

2 have also been joined by Council Member Reynoso as
3 well. So, Council Members Ayala, Chin, Koslowitz and
4 Levin in that order.

5 COUNCIL MEMEBR AYALA: Thank you Madam Chair. I
6 know that my colleague Council Member Salamanca asked
7 about the site selection, but could you explain
8 during that process, because I remember it being
9 pretty extensive. What was the experience like, how
10 many sites did the administration actually look at in
11 terms of, because I believe it was a number between
12 eleven and fifteen sites that were vetted at that
13 time?

14 DANA KAPLAN: Yes, I think that - I know there
15 were at least eleven sites that we looked at and we
16 solicited suggestions for sites that was part of the
17 process.

18 COUNCIL MEMEBR AYALA: And how many times did the
19 Administration go back and re-vet those same sites?

20 DANA KAPLAN: So, we did an initial vetting in
21 consideration of all of those sites based off of the
22 criteria that I had mentioned previously. We asked a
23 number of members of local elected officials to
24 suggest additional sites. The sites that we felt
25 were closest to meeting the criteria, we engaged the

2 master plan consultants in helping us consider and
3 so, the site that we looked at most extensively was
4 the other Sherman Avenue courthouse location
5 considering its use in a number of different
6 configurations, but I think that reflects that it was
7 certainly something that we took seriously.

8 COUNCIL MEMEBR AYALA: Were there other sites
9 that had been suggested to the Administration, that
10 the Administration then went back that were not part
11 of the initial core sites that had been identified?

12 ELIZABETH GLAZER: I am sorry, will you -

13 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: So, the Administration had
14 - was it eleven or was it fifteen, I don't remember.

15 DANA KAPLAN: I don't know, I remember it was at
16 least eleven. So, I think there were some sites that
17 we had not initially looked at and had then been
18 suggested by some members of the Bronx delegation
19 that we then took a follow up look at and considered
20 and then reported back.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: And so, again, the issue
22 with the courthouse versus the pound, was a matter of
23 the way that the two state lots are joining the one
24 city owned lot was configured?

2 DANA KAPLAN: Yes, so initially we had looked at
3 just one of the lots and all of the lots are very
4 small, so I should say that to begin with. So, we
5 looked primarily at one lot and determined it was
6 very small. It was suggested that we look at other
7 nearby sites and consider other lots including the
8 suggestion to look at the underutilized sections of
9 family court, which is why we considered the use of
10 the family court annex in particular. Those three
11 sites are not exactly contiguous with each other.
12 There is the Grand Jury rotunda that kind of breaks
13 up the site and so, it would require de-mapping of a
14 street and then again, it was kind of a snake or
15 zigzag formation. So, it's not a continuous site.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: And where exactly were
17 those lots located?

18 DANA KAPLAN: Actually, so Julia, do you want to
19 perhaps come up and - Julia Kerson with the Deputy's
20 Mayor's Office of Operations was also a part of this
21 and so, can perhaps provide some additional detail.

22 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Council is going to swear you
23 in.

24 COUNCIL CLERK: Do you affirm that the testimony
25 that you are about to give will be the truth, the

2 whole truth and nothing but the truth? Please state
3 your name when you answer.

4 JULIA KERSON: Julia Kerson, yes.

5 JULIA KERSON: Yes, so, the site that Dana was
6 talking about also included some lots directly across
7 the street next to the family court annex. We looked
8 at that, we also considered possibly de-mapping
9 portions of streets to allow for greater site area,
10 determining that in addition to the areas not being
11 next to each other and the lot size not being large
12 enough, it would cut off a lot of the movement
13 through the community and neighborhood by taking
14 portions of the street out of the street grid.

15 So, there were a number of considerations around
16 that site making it not entirely feasible, in
17 addition to the property ownership concerns.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: And all of this happened
19 after we made the announcement here at City Hall,
20 that site selection had been made. So, after the
21 fact, we stopped the clock and went back and asked
22 the Administration to revert all of those sites and
23 then added multiple sites to be looked at, is that
24 correct?

2 DANA KAPLAN: Correct, we obviously shared our
3 identification of the existing NYPD Tow Pound and
4 heard requests that we look more seriously at other
5 sites in the Bronx and so, we did go back and
6 consider a number of different locations. We did
7 that additional analysis and at the conclusion of
8 that additional work and effort, determined that the
9 NYPD Tow Pound remained the most viable site.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: And, can you explain, does
11 anyone know what the height of the existing
12 courthouse on 161st Street is now?

13 BRENDA COOKE: I don't know off the top of my
14 head, but we can get back to you with that
15 information.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: But the proposed site for
17 the lots behind the criminal courthouse would have
18 allowed for a significantly taller building to be
19 housed right smack in the middle of the courthouse
20 behind the criminal courthouse building, is that
21 correct?

22 BRENDA COOKE: Yes, it would have been much taller
23 than the courthouse.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: How much taller?
25

2 DANA KAPLAN: So, I don't know the relative
3 height of the courthouse, but we do know that when we
4 looked at what a comparable program was at that time
5 of our current program, when we used the portions of
6 the site that were viable and would allow for a
7 contiguous floor plan, it would have been upwards of
8 500 foot facility.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Now, the Lippman
10 Commission recommendations indicated that these sites
11 should be positioned in communities that were the
12 least residential to minimize the impact on the
13 residential communities. I agree wholeheartedly with
14 that. Would you say that the 161st site is non-
15 residential?

16 DANA KAPLAN: So, we certainly know that there is
17 a mix of residential and industrial use and so, one
18 of the considerations that we have made as part of
19 the proposed plan is that the portion of the site
20 that would be used for the proposed detention
21 facility is the portion of the site that is closer to
22 the industrial use and the Bruckner. And the portion
23 of the site that is adjacent to a residential
24 neighborhood is where we are proposing a mixed-use
25 residential facility.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: I mean knowing the 161st
3 site pretty well, my perception is that it's pretty
4 heavily residential and I am trying to just make the
5 distinction because a lot of criticism has been given
6 to the fact that the Concord site is primarily
7 residential and I would argue that the 161st Street
8 is just as heavily if not more so populated by
9 residents that live in the immediate vicinity of the
10 courthouse, is that correct?

11 DANA KAPLAN: Yes.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Thank you Dana. Now,
13 obviously there are a lot of concerns regarding the
14 siting of the pound. A lot of those concerns are
15 related to safety to impact on the property value of
16 the adjacent homes. Could you speak a little to how
17 the Administration prepares to address some of those
18 concerns?

19 DANA KAPLAN: Yes, so I will turn it over to the
20 Department of Corrections who can speak a little bit
21 about what the work is that they do in communities,
22 but I think it is very important just to note that in
23 neighborhoods where there are existing detention
24 facilities and this is something that we looked very
25 closely at. When the site of the Manhattan Detention

2 Center and the Brooklyn House of Detention, that when
3 those facilities opened or when the case when the
4 Brooklyn House reopened, we did not see any negative
5 impact on property values and significantly we did
6 not see any negative impact on crime in the
7 neighborhood. And so, I know there was also a study
8 that the Lippman Commission I believe was involved in
9 that looked at those same questions and determined
10 that there was not a negative impact in New York City
11 of having detention facilities in neighborhoods as it
12 relates to crime and property values.

13 Now, that being said, the issue of safety is one
14 that we take very seriously, and we certainly want to
15 make sure that we are working closely with your
16 office. Working with NYPD and you know, other
17 community leaders to develop whatever appropriate
18 safety plans are and again, Department of Corrections
19 can speak to how they operate in the neighborhoods.

20 CYNTHIA BRANN: Good morning. So, internally, we
21 have our own patrols that do perimeter checks
22 routinely on the outside of our buildings. We also
23 have the exteriors outtraded with cameras to capture
24 every angle. Additionally, we have a compliance and
25 safety center that monitors real time, live view, all

2 the exteriors of our building, all over the city and
3 we work closely with NYPD to identify any issues
4 outside the building. But what we have found is
5 people don't linger around the outside of the jails.
6 And so, we haven't experienced crime around any of
7 our facilities.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Now, the courthouse also
9 houses inmates, temporarily right? Sometimes for a
10 day while they are in court. They release inmates
11 from the 164th Street courthouse, right?

12 CYNTHIA BRANN: Yes.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Has there been an uptake
14 in crime in that area?

15 CYNTHIA BRANN: Not that I am aware of, no.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Okay, the concern that I
17 had when obviously this came before me was, the fact
18 that the pound is situated in the poorest
19 congressional district. This is a community that has
20 been disenfranchised for many years and has seen the
21 lowest levels of investments that I have ever
22 witnessed. And in an attempt you know, to make this
23 right, you know, I have asked the Administration to
24 take a holistic, more comprehensive view of the
25 entire Mott Haven community and what the impact of a

2 facility of this magnitude coming to the community
3 would mean and we have asked for a series of local
4 community investments, because we believe that we
5 need to build a community around this facility. So,
6 that this facility does not become the focal point of
7 the South Bronx. Could you elaborate on what
8 commitments the Administration is willing to commit
9 to? What is your thought process around that?

10 DANA KAPLAN: So, I should just say that Council
11 Member Ayala, you have been a strong advocate for the
12 other community needs that are part of Mott Haven in
13 South Bronx community. And I know that this has been
14 a top priority for you and we, as you know, have
15 participated in a number of different meetings with
16 you, with local community leaders and members to
17 understand what the key priorities and concerns are.
18 As well as, we received a significant amount of
19 feedback in this area in regard specifically from the
20 Bronx neighborhood advisory council. We have your
21 list and the list from the Bronx neighborhood
22 advisory council of what are the key identified
23 priority investments. And we are taking that list
24 very seriously and we will be working with you on
25 making sure that we are able to address some of those

2 outstanding needs and concerns for the Mott Haven
3 community in particular.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: I appreciate it, thank
5 you.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Good morning. I think a
7 lot of us support the important goal of closing Riker
8 and building a more just, humane criminal justice
9 system. And I think with this four-borough based
10 jail, one of the important things is that we do have
11 to look at community impact. And the site in
12 Manhattan originally it was 80 Centers Street, which
13 is on the other side of the criminal court and away
14 from the Chung Pak senior building. And at that
15 time, the Administration was saying that oh, if we
16 empty out the MDC, that could be given back to the
17 community as a community facility. Then the plan
18 changed to go back and abandon 80 Center Street,
19 maybe you can also explain the reason why that was
20 changed. And now, we're back to the original site of
21 the MDC which is right next to the Chung Pak Senior
22 building, which has 88 units and they also share one
23 of the walls with MDC.

24 So, one of the biggest concerns that I have and
25 also from the community is how do we protect the

2 seniors and their caregiver during the demolition and
3 the construction years that's going to happen? How
4 do we protect them from the noise, from the dust?
5 You know, from the traffic? Those are the big
6 concerns. So, I wanted you to first address the site
7 change and then, what DDC are going to put in place
8 to protect the senior while the demolition and
9 construction are happening?

10 DANA KAPLAN: Absolutely and thank you Council
11 Member Chin and also, you know, just want to thank
12 you for your strong advocacy on behalf of the tenants
13 and Chung Pak in particular. Obviously, we know that
14 this is a key concern of yours. Something that we've
15 heard from the Manhattan neighborhood advisory
16 committee and we take this very seriously.

17 Specific to 80 Centers Street, it obviously as
18 you are well aware, we had initially proposed and
19 considered the demolition of 80 Centers Street to be
20 used for the detention facility and part of the
21 consideration there had been that it was closer to
22 the Civic Center, further from the Chinatown
23 neighborhood and also, would have returned one of the
24 buildings to a community use.

2 As we went through the process, it became clear
3 that the relocation of the existing tenants of 80
4 Centers Street would have added a significant time
5 and cost to the project overall, which would have
6 impeded our overall goals to close Rikers as quickly
7 as possible. And we also heard community concerns
8 about what the potential shadow impact would be on
9 Columbus Park. And so, as a result of those factors,
10 we determined that the site of the existing Manhattan
11 Detention Center, 124-125 White was the more viable
12 location and advanced that as part of this ULURP
13 project, or proposal.

14 I should say that we remain committed to ensuring
15 that there is still community development
16 opportunities provided as part of this because we
17 know that that is something that was lost in that
18 relocation back. And that, it requires us to be
19 particularly mindful of what the impact is of the
20 seniors as we go through this demolition and
21 construction process, as well as of course, how we
22 can address the needs of Chung Pak.

23 And so, I will turn to Jamie and Julia to speak
24 about what the plans are in terms of mitigation and
25

3 then we can also speak to additional questions you
4 have.

5 JAMIE TORRES SPRINGER: Thank you Dana and thanks
6 Council Member for your partnership in all of our
7 work.

8 As you know, DDC takes very seriously and is
9 highly constrained by requirements to mitigate and
10 monitor air quality, noise, dust, traffic impacts.
11 This is all fully outlined in the EIS and so, all of
12 our work here, our contractors will be required to
13 follow Federal, State, and City legislation related
14 to noise control, adhere to DEP's noise code. For
15 this project we will also be going above and beyond
16 those standard mitigations and controls.

17 We will have independent on-site air quality,
18 traffic and noise monitors in place that would detect
19 vibrations, noise, or traffic above safety thresholds
20 and when that occurs, we would be able to trigger
21 stop work, in order to remedy the situation. Our
22 contractor will also be developing transportation
23 management plan for construction and a construction
24 health and safety plan. In addition to that, our
25 intention is to have a full time, 24/7 community
construction liaison's available for each of the four

2 facility constructions that will be available
3 obviously to members of Council, members of the
4 community and other stakeholders to call at any time,
5 to provide information, remedy problems that emerge
6 and so on.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: One of the requests that
8 was made by the Chung Pak management, I think it was
9 ways in community meetings, was that the senior
10 building has an outdoor garden on the 13th floor and
11 when constructions are going on, they won't be able
12 to even get a little bit of sunlight. So, the
13 request is that the city help build an enclosure, a
14 glass enclosure, so that the senior can still be able
15 to go out, get sunlight while your demolition is
16 happening and then there is also other needs to make
17 sure that the senior building remain permanently
18 affordable. I mean, and also, the small businesses
19 they're impacted. There is 6,000 square feet that are
20 at the MDC that have a number of small businesses.
21 They are going to have to be relocated or they have
22 to go out of business and then also, the small
23 businesses along Chung Pak on Walkers Street
24 definitely the business is going to be disrupted and
25 also other small business along Access Street,

2 because the streets are so narrow. So, is the city
3 right now working on concrete plan to address the
4 needs and help for these small businesses?

5 DANA KAPLAN: Yes, so I think that Julia can
6 speak to some of this and then also, DCAS is here who
7 can also offer some additional information about the
8 communications and conversations with Chung Pak to
9 date around what their concerns are during
10 relocation.

11 JULIA KERSON: Thank you very much Council Member
12 for the question. We are committed to working with
13 your office and with Chung Pak to make sure that we
14 can address their needs and I look forward to
15 continued engagement with you and them in looking
16 into the possibilities and I think DCAS is here who
17 can speak more to the relocation plans.

18 COUNCIL CLERK: Please state your name before
19 responding. Do you swear or affirm the testimony
20 that you are about to give in response to Council
21 Member questions will be the truth, the whole truth
22 and nothing but the truth?

23 MATTHEW BURKE: Matthew Burke, I do. So, yes, we
24 have an ongoing dialogue with Chung Pak right now,
25 who is a tenant of the city's and we are working with

2 them actively to come up with relocation plans for
3 their subtenants which are small businesses.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Are you going to get it
5 done before we have to vote on this?

6 MATTHEW BURKE: That is the intention.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Okay, that have to been in
8 there. I wanted to go back to the community facility
9 because when it was at 80 Center, the diagram that
10 was shown and was talked about was 20,000 square
11 feet. And I think when you move back to the MDC, the
12 city was also making that commitment and then all of
13 a sudden, we found out that 6,000 of that space is
14 actually the retail space and the community don't
15 want to lose any of those retail space. So, then the
16 community facility now is much less. It's down to
17 maybe 14,000 and then from your design, it's nothing
18 that really is a large space.

19 So, what I am asking for is that the commitment
20 from the city to look for alternatives of the
21 community facilities, community space that is owned
22 by the city that can be added to the community
23 facility space. Because one of the important aspects
24 of the community that we have always talked about was
25 the Cultural Performance Center and initially we

3 thought that oh, the city's going to make a
4 commitment for that when it was at 80 Center and that
5 disappeared.

6 So, we still want to hear directly from the city
7 that the commitment still stands. That they are
8 actively looking to support more community space for
9 us.

10 DANA KAPLAN: Yes, and so, as you noted,
11 obviously there is the minimum of 20,000 square feet
12 of community-oriented space that is in 124-125 White
13 Street. We know that there are existing small
14 businesses in the detention facility right now that
15 are managed by Chung Pak. And so, a consideration
16 has been how to ensure continuity for those
17 businesses or for Chung Pak, as well as then what is
18 the appropriate use that the community would work to
19 identify for the additional square footage that is in
20 that facility.

21 We have heard requests to expand the square
22 footage within the facility itself and of course the
23 constraint there is that we understand that the
24 height and the density of the facilities are a key
25 concern. And so, adding additional square footage
within 124-125 White Street could have the negative

2 impact on what the other neighborhood and community
3 concerns are.

4 With that being said, we are not limited to
5 looking at community space just at that location and
6 have certainly heard what some other key needs are
7 and priorities from the neighborhood and yes, are
8 committed to working with you Council Member on
9 ensuring that we can commit to community space that
10 is not just limited to that location.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Okay, I have two more
12 questions Chair. One, is on Columbus Park. I mean,
13 that is one of the heavily utilized park in lower
14 Manhattan and facilities there are not great,
15 especially the bathroom, the pavilion. It needs a
16 lot investment from the city and that's something the
17 community has been asking for. And that is what we
18 want to make sure, that the city do commit to helping
19 to fix up that park. So, that seniors and community
20 residence can continue to be able to use it and one
21 of the reasons why 80 Center was off the table
22 because of the environmental impacts that would cast
23 a big shadow on the park. And so, we want to make
24 sure that that park is protected. So, that is one of

3 the major community investments that we are asking
4 for.

5 Finally, is that I really do have a big problem
6 with the height, because that is going to tower over
7 the senior building and the surrounding low-rise
8 tenements. It's going to be the tallest building
9 there. We want to make sure, I mean, I can see from
10 your design, we want to make sure the facility is
11 humane, is safe, and I can see the reason why you
12 have to have those services in there.

13 But what we want to look at is that how is the
14 city working with the state, continue to push for
15 criminal justice reform and also, there are other
16 alternative programs to incarceration that we can
17 start doing now, that can bring down the population
18 even more, so that we don't have to build such a big
19 facility. Because the other one that I haven't heard
20 at all, is that we the Council, among the four of us,
21 we have been pushing for that detainees who have
22 serious or mental health issues or health care needs,
23 they should not be in the detention facility. They
24 should be you know, in a facility that can give them
25 the services that they need. And we heard their
discussion with health and hospital in terms of

2 providing a facility there for people who have mental
3 health issues or other health issues, that they can
4 have a place for them, so they don't have to be in
5 the detention center and that would help us bring
6 down the population. And in return, that would help
7 us bring down the height.

8 I mean, for us here, because our footprint is
9 small, it's the height, it's not so much the bulk.
10 But we want to be sure that when the design build go
11 into effect, that calculating the number of
12 detainee's, that could be decreased with specialized
13 facility that we don't have to have such a tall
14 building in our community.

15 DANA KAPLAN: So, as it relates to Columbus Park,
16 you know, I think we recognize what a valuable
17 community asset that is and obviously have been
18 having conversations with your office about what the
19 needs are in that park in particular and are
20 committed to working on that issue with you.

21 As it relates to the height of the facilities,
22 you know, we also understand that this is a core
23 concern and consideration and we are committed with
24 working with you Council Member and other Members of
25 the Council to develop the best possible plan to

2 address this and to bring down the heights of the
3 facilities. Obviously, as you acknowledged and note,
4 you know, one of the key concerns and considerations
5 that we are looking at is how to ensure that we do
6 that in a way that doesn't compromise the fundamental
7 program and services available for people in
8 detention and things such as smaller housing units
9 and you know, the things that are actually part of
10 this reform plan.

11 There are a number of ways in which we are
12 committed to continuing to work on you know, how to
13 reduce the population, but as just in a specific
14 response to the reference that you made to
15 consideration of whether a subpopulation of people
16 could be housed in a more hospital like environment,
17 we do have a feasibility study that is currently
18 underway that is looking at whether there is a
19 subpopulation of people with particularly acute and
20 complex medical and mental health, behavioral health
21 issues, that could be better served in a hospital
22 environment. And as we have the determination of
23 that feasibility study in the near future, we will be
24 able to share and that may have some implications.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Chair, I think in the
3 coming weeks, we are going to have a lot of work to
4 do. We have to get these answers and we have to get
5 these commitments before we are committed to vote.
6 Thank you.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: Thank you. I am going
8 to start off with the easy ones. What will be the
9 staffing of the Department of Corrections at the
10 Queens facility?

11 ELIZABETH GLAZER: Again, since the inside of the
12 buildings have not been designed, we don't know what
13 the housing areas will look like. Therefore, we
14 don't know what the ratio of individuals in custody
15 to staff will be. And so, we don't have a plan for
16 that yet.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: But you do know how
18 many prisoners will be there?

19 DANA KAPLAN: So, the Queens facility will have
20 1,150 beds. That's the same as all of the other
21 proposed sites. We anticipate that will house just
22 under about 1,000 individuals. We anticipate that
23 200 of those 1,000 will be female.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: What would be the
3 shifts of these correction officers? Right now, they
4 have shifts right?

5 ELIZABETH GLAZER: Correct.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: And what are they?

7 ELIZABETH GLAZER: There are standardized day
8 shift, mid afternoon to evening, and overnight shifts
9 and then, there are modified shifts that start at
10 various hours throughout the day and we so that,
11 because we have to accommodate court and other
12 appearances and different operational practices that
13 we need people staged throughout he day.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: Well, I have to know
15 what the traffic will be in Queens. I know what it
16 is right now, and I would have to know the shifts of
17 the Correction Officers and I would also have to know
18 what are the visiting hours. Because between the
19 hours of eight in the morning and ten in the morning,
20 Queens Boulevard has a lot of traffic and I do not
21 want to add to it. There are two highways there, you
22 have the Van Wyck Expressway and you have the Grand
23 Central Parkway and I do not want to add to it.

24 And at night, between four and seven, you cannot
25 drive down Queens Boulevard more than ten miles an

2 hour, if that. So, that is very important to me of
3 how that's going to be worked out.

4 JULIA KERSON: Thank you very much Council
5 Member. We have heard from both yourself and the
6 community that traffic is a key concern for this
7 area. We've already taken a number of steps to help
8 address some of the potential traffic problems that
9 might result from this project and we look forward to
10 continuing working with you to do that.

11 We are planning for parking for staff onsite and
12 additional public parking that should help alleviate
13 both members of the public and staff from circling
14 the neighborhood looking for parking. That should
15 help limit some of the impacts. We are also
16 providing for a number of standard mitigations,
17 signal retiming, lane restriping, those sorts of
18 things to help address potential traffic impacts. In
19 addition, and I think you know, what will be really
20 helpful is that we're planning to conduct regular
21 traffic monitoring of the conditions on the ground
22 because our analysis are sort of forecast. But
23 what's really important is what people are really
24 experiencing and that will help give us the

2 information we need in real time to address the
3 impacts that occurring as they occur.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: Well, I hope you sit
5 down and consult with me, because I am living in
6 Queens in that area, not far, 57 years and I know it
7 very well. And I have worked in that area since
8 1988. So, I see it every day, I can look out of my
9 office building and see the traffic on every highway
10 and Queens Boulevard, and we must deal with that.

11 Tell me about the women's facility. Has there
12 been a decision made?

13 DANA KAPLAN: So, we are of course proposing that
14 the women's facility be located in the site as I
15 said, this was a change. Initially we had proposed
16 that there would be women's housing units within each
17 of the four proposed facilities and we received a
18 significant amount of feedback from different women's
19 organizations, service providers. We did focus
20 groups at Rosie's with women in detention and
21 facility staff. We did focus groups and sent out
22 questionnaires to a number of different women service
23 organizations. We heard overwhelmingly that there
24 was a recommendation that the women all be housed at
25 one location to provide the best level of gender

2 responsive services and programs. As well as to
3 ensure that there was not the vulnerability of being
4 a small number of women in a facility primarily
5 designed for male; a male population. We are
6 proposing that that be at the Queens location where
7 we could provide what would essentially be a separate
8 experience for women in detention while we would have
9 just some shared administrative support space to have
10 as efficient plan as possible. We are committed to
11 working with different women service organizations on
12 developing things such as plans for transportation,
13 just recognizing that obviously while far more
14 accessible than Rikers Island, that it would require
15 traveling for people to visit their loved ones in
16 detention to one location.

17 So, we're committed to continuing our work with
18 different women's organizations on this issue.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: Okay, now the number
20 if the Queens facility does come to Queens, it will
21 be included in the 1,150?

22 DANA KAPLAN: Correct, yes.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: Okay, because at the
24 beginning and I fought very hard. I was not going to
25 support this if you had the infirmary because if the

2 infirmary came into Queens, it would no longer be a
3 friendly facility and I fought very hard that that
4 wouldn't happen. You would have the buses coming
5 back and you would have more people coming from every
6 borough and that's unacceptable you know, to me.

7 The height of this building is absolutely,
8 absolutely, absolutely unacceptable to me. It cannot
9 be that tall. We had a facility for 40 years right
10 there, it's still there. I have toured it, there
11 were 500 prisoners in that facility. It's only eight
12 stories high and if you are going to put the double
13 the amount, that brings it up to 16. You have four
14 stories; if you went to 20, you would have four
15 stories that you could do your facilities - all the
16 different facilities in. Twenty-seven stories is
17 absolutely unacceptable to me and to my community.

18 My community is not happy with this whole
19 proposal, but 27 stories is unacceptable. You went
20 down two stories; it was 29 originally. That's not
21 enough, it's not sufficient enough.

22 DANA KAPLAN: Council Member, you know, thank you
23 for your concerns and perspective on this.

24 Obviously, we heard you as it relates to that
25 specialized medical annex and we responded by

2 removing that from the proposal and we are absolutely
3 committed to working with you to bring down the
4 height of this proposed facility.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: Because, I just want
6 to say, I've been around the block a few times and I
7 know, I know for sure that when this Administration
8 is gone, which is in two years and a couple of
9 months, and I will be gone also. That they are going
10 to decide if there is extra room to start putting
11 people in there from all over and that's
12 unacceptable.

13 DANA KAPLAN: Understood.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: Thank you.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Hello everybody. Thank
16 you for being here today and for your testimony and
17 for all of the collaboration over the last year and a
18 half with the constituents in the district I
19 represent downtown Brooklyn.

20 I have just a few questions. I don't want to
21 take up too much time as I do want to get to my
22 colleagues. The first question I have is around the
23 existing Brooklyn House of Detention and my first
24 question is do you see that as a possibility to fix
25 the existing Brooklyn House of Detention or fix it up

2 or rehab it? Is it rehabable? Why is it
3 insufficient for the next century going forward?

4 CYNTHIA BRANN: Thank you for that question and
5 our answer is a resounding no. The facility itself,
6 the design and layout of that facility, is to say
7 that there insufficient site lines for safety as an
8 understatement. It has double tier housing units in
9 a layout that has many blind spots. There are
10 catwalks that officers have to be stationed on which
11 are at elevated levels in order to try and see and
12 supervise individuals who maybe inside their cell or
13 in the insufficiently sized day rooms. The facility
14 has absolutely inadequate programming space. There
15 is no programming space on the housing units at all
16 and very, very limited shared programming space in
17 that facility.

18 The nature of the design of those cells within
19 those housing units are old bar stock format and so,
20 it looks like something from a very dated movie or
21 something.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: For modern reference like
23 Chernobyl I think, of like the show Chernobyl that's
24 been out there. It belongs somewhere in that so be
25 it.

2 CYNTHIA BRANN: It's good for a movie set but
3 fully inadequate for the Criminal Justice System that
4 the City is supporting through the proposal of this
5 project.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Right, and just it came up
7 this summer an extreme heat. It has no air
8 conditioning system. How did you deal with the heat
9 this summer, for example?

10 CYNTHIA BROWN: So, yes, thank you for raising
11 that issue and I think it very clearly identifies
12 that that conditions with which people are living and
13 working in the city's jail system are beyond woefully
14 out of date and insufficient for a humane climate-
15 controlled experience. The Department has a number
16 of procedures to try and alleviate and to make people
17 as comfortable as possible who are in the facilities,
18 either living, working or visiting. It involves
19 water, ice and fans. You know, there is really not
20 much more beyond that.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Ice and fans.

22 CYNTHIA BRANN: Correct.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: But you can't retrofit a
24 new air conditioning system onto that building?

2 CYNTHIA BRANN: To install the duct work in order
3 to do a forced air system in a facility like that, it
4 would - I am not an engineer, but as I understand it,
5 the construction materials used to build that
6 facility, the rebar and the concrete -

7 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: It wouldn't work, you
8 couldn't bust a hole through the concrete to put a -
9 it wouldn't be very effective.

10 CYNTHIA BRANN: Correct, and then it follows with
11 the additional information that we were just
12 discussing that you can't do anything about the
13 absence of existing space for those necessary support
14 program, education and you know, reentry services
15 that are critical to this program.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: What year was it built?
17 Sorry, this isn't like a -

18 CYNTHIA BRANN: In the 1950's.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: I mean I have a you know,
20 my opinion on this is that we talk a lot about how
21 terrible Rikers is and the jails on Rikers. I
22 believe that the jail in downtown Brooklyn is just as
23 bad if not worse and I feel very strongly that that
24 building needs to come down and so, kind of wherever
25 we go forward, that building should not be part of

2 our Criminal Justice System on into the future and
3 the future decades. And I think that we have this
4 opportunity to have an impact on that and I think
5 that we should take the opportunity.

6 So, I just wanted to make it clear that it's not
7 a rehabable building and since I'm glad that the
8 proposal ten years ago did not come because that
9 would have done some rehabbing or try to
10 retrofitting.

11 The Brooklyn proposal is a higher density and
12 higher height than the other proposals. Can you
13 explain why that is? In particular the density.
14 Just from a land use perspective, we do talk a lot
15 about height, but density is the whole envelope of
16 the building and this has you know, right now, it's a
17 proposed density of 16.35 is that right? It was in
18 the presentation. You know, it's not a top quiz
19 here.

20 DANA KAPLAN: 16.36.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: 16.36. Significantly
22 higher density than the other sites. I was just
23 wondering if you could speak to that a little bit,
24 why this site would have a higher density? Does that

2 mean it would have a higher population or what's
3 going into that?

4 DANA KAPLAN: Julia can speak to this issue.

5 JULIA KERSON: Sure. Thank you, Council Member
6 and we understand that density is a key concern for
7 the community and yourself and continue to work to
8 reduce the size and density of these facilities with
9 your office.

10 It's in large part a result of the size of the
11 lot itself. It's smaller than in the other
12 facilities particularly Brooklyn and Manhattan have
13 smaller lot sizes which drives the density up,
14 because the programs that we are seeking to provide
15 for these folks require more space. The needs of the
16 people inside are **[inaudible 2:59:34]** and we want to
17 provide for all of the programming that meets our
18 vision of Criminal Justice.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: So, it's a question of
20 efficiency of space?

21 JULIA KERSON: Right.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: And did you — the
23 community early on had a number of times asked about
24 examining a second location. So, not saying that
25 this location is inappropriate but that it might be

2 insufficient to meet the needs in Brooklyn. Were you
3 able to look in other locations in Brooklyn to see if
4 they were viable?

5 DANA KAPLAN: So, there were a few suggestions
6 that were made to us, obviously including by your
7 office for us to look at and we did follow up, but we
8 determined that there were not other viable sites.
9 And really that proximity that this facility provides
10 to the courthouse is what makes this a particularly
11 viable location.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: The other sites being in
13 the navy yard where they were -

14 DANA KAPLAN: Exactly and that was per a
15 suggestion. We did follow up and there are a number
16 of federal issues as it relates to that site.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Right, right. Regarding
18 traffic patterns and a big issue that we have in
19 downtown Brooklyn around on tree parking of placard
20 or quasi placard vehicles. Vehicles with a business
21 card in the dashboard, a COBA card on the dashboard
22 and other union card on the dashboard. You know, a
23 note that says I am you know, a Correction Officer,
24 whatever it is. We have a legal parking problem in
25

2 downtown Brooklyn. How are you planning to address
3 this issue with this proposal?

4 DANA KAPLAN: So, I will just say in this
5 proposal separate from placard issue, as you know,
6 there is a below grade parking that is provided as
7 part of this proposal.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: How many parking spots?

9 DANA KAPLAN: 292.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay.

11 DANA KAPLAN: So, and the intention there is to
12 address the issue right now of staff parking in the
13 street. So, we understand that parking is a concern.
14 I know Department of Transportation is here who can
15 speak to our efforts around addressing placard abuse
16 across the board.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: And sorry, before we get
18 to that, maybe Commissioner you could speak to this.
19 Why do staff need to drive to work? A lot of us take
20 the train to work. Why do they need to drive.

21 CYNTHIA BRANN: Well, I can tell you that our
22 Correction Officers aren't required to live in the
23 city and so some travel from upstate. Some travel
24 from Long Island and so, they use their vehicles.

2 Before Department of Transportation comes up, I
3 want to assure everyone that I am committed to
4 following the laws and the rules of the city with
5 regard to parking. And I was just at the Brooklyn
6 facility the other day and I could see why people
7 were upset with our staff.

8 When those issues are brought to my attention, I
9 have the Borough Chief of Security remove that
10 persons placard and so they lose that privilege. I
11 would hope that the PD is treating our staff who
12 abuse the privilege of any kind of parking spot, to
13 treat them like anybody else and I support the
14 following of all the rules and the policies with
15 regard to that.

16 We are committed to being a good neighbor,
17 regardless of what borough that we're in.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: And just to be clear, I am
19 not singling out Correction Staff, it is every
20 uniformed agency staff in the city and every non-
21 uniformed agency staff in the city. There is DOT
22 cars that are abusing parking privileges. There are
23 you know, DEP, it's across the board. So, we're not
24 trying to single out Corrections Officers.

2 CYNTHIA BRANN: I appreciate that. I also wanted
3 to point out that because of our different tours of
4 duty, that people also take their cars to work rather
5 than -

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Because they might have to
7 leave at four in the morning, things like that or get
8 there at four in the morning.

9 CYNTHIA BRANN: Yes.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Right, I mean there is
11 some rational to that, but it's an ongoing issue, so
12 I do appreciate the parking provision here.

13 Do you want to speak a little bit Rebecca to the

14 -

15 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Council is going to swear you
16 in.

17 COUNCIL CLERK: Do you swear or affirm that the
18 testimony you are about to give in response to
19 questions will be the truth, the whole truth and
20 nothing but the truth? Please state your name before
21 you respond.

22 REBECCA ZACK: Rebecca Zack and I do swear that I
23 will tell the truth. Hi, Council Member. I know we
24 work pretty closely with your office and that you
25 have reached out to us pretty consistently about

2 placard abuse in your district. And we continue to
3 make changes as we see necessary but the city
4 including DOT and NYPD were working towards
5 technology that will help better enforce placards
6 throughout the city. The Mayor announced his
7 initiative back in February. We continue to work
8 towards those goals and as this process moves
9 forward, that process will move forward to.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay.

11 REBECCA ZACK: And if you ever see a DOT vehicle,
12 please let us know.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay, they are around.
14 Downtown Brooklyn, it's everywhere.

15 REBECCA ZACK: Glomani's has got my number so.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Yes.

17 REBECCA ZACK: Thanks.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Moving onto some broader
19 issues with Criminal Justice reform measures that the
20 city is in control of. If money wasn't an object,
21 and we could implement every type of criminal justice
22 reform measure to the maximum scale, what would we
23 want to do with the current tools that we have and
24 even looking at new and innovative tools that we
25 aren't currently using? On an unlimited budget.

2 ELIZABETH GLAZER: So, I think there are a lot of
3 things we would want to do. I think we would first
4 want to build from a foundation of strength. We have
5 had enormous success with diversion programs, giving
6 judges an option to have people await for the
7 disposition of their case in the community as opposed
8 to a jail. There is an opportunity there for
9 expansion.

10 I think we want to be able to also give judges
11 the option not to sentence people to city sentences
12 at all. There have been big city and counsel
13 investments and alternatives to incarceration. That
14 by itself creates a kind of virtuous cycle. The less
15 jail you have, the less jail will be used.

16 I think we want to continue to encourage the
17 state to make very, very significant reforms in
18 parole. It is the only part of our population that
19 is increasing.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Technical parole
21 violators?

22 ELIZABETH GLAZER: Technical parole violators
23 which are now almost ten percent of our population.
24 Surely, state legislation would be helpful.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Just to be clear, that's
3 people that are doing something that me, I wouldn't
4 get in trouble for, but they would because it's
5 somehow a violation of their parole.

6 ELIZABETH GLAZER: They are people who have been
7 released from state prison. They are now under
8 supervision by the state, by parole. They have a
9 number of rules that they have to follow that
10 violating them aren't by themselves violations of
11 law; although they can be; Curfew, associating with
12 certain folks, etc.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Smoking marijuana at this
14 point.

15 ELIZABETH GLAZER: Potentially, yeah, exactly and
16 there are a ton of things that could be done to
17 ensure the jail is not the first stop and to the
18 extent that people are in jail, that their cases are
19 heard in a timely manner. And then, I think most
20 profoundly given how dramatic the changes have been
21 in our justice system even in the last five years and
22 obviously building on you know a history of a lot of
23 work and also errors of the past 30. Most
24 profoundly, we've seen just a change in the way in
25 which New Yorkers behave. Fewer and fewer crimes are

2 committed and I think that we need to look earlier
3 and earlier to prevent people having contact with the
4 justice system and ensure that that is never an
5 option. And so, that's really a very fundamental
6 change and there has been a lot of investment in this
7 administration, in jobs, in play, in physical spaces,
8 but I think that's something that we need to turn to
9 with even more attention.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Things like the Cure
11 Violence Initiative, Crisis Management.

12 ELIZABETH GLAZER: Yeah, I think the Map
13 Initiative Neighborhood Stat, which is not exactly
14 about crime, but about all the things that promote
15 safety. Like investment in jobs, universal summer
16 youth employment for those areas. Investment in
17 physical spaces, making parks and the developments
18 more inviting. All of those are important pieces.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Right, so the Close Rikers
20 Just Leadership build communities platform, a good
21 place to start, I think.

22 If we were propose to you all a list of
23 investments that we think might be wise to pursue,
24 you'd consider it? You would take it under
25 advisement?

2 ELIZABETH GLAZER: I think that's what this
3 process is all about and we're obviously committed to
4 working with the Council on these issues that are of
5 importance to all of us.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Great, great. Two more
7 questions. One, is therapeutic beds, did any of my
8 colleagues touch on the therapeutic beds issue and
9 kind of where we are with that and how many sites we
10 are looking at within the health and hospital system.
11 If you already answered it; you don't have to answer
12 it now.

13 DANA KAPLAN: So, I spoke on it briefly, I said
14 that we do have a feasibility study underway. It's
15 looking at a small number of different locations
16 throughout the health and hospital system and
17 obviously as I said earlier, this is a study as to
18 the viability of whether a subpopulation of people
19 with particularly acute complex medical, mental
20 health, behavioral health needs could be housed in a
21 hospital like environment. And as soon as that
22 feasibility study is complete, we will be able to
23 share that, and our intention is for that to be
24 complete very soon.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: So, that's it for me right
3 now. I will turn it back to the Chair if I have
4 another question, I might come back for a second
5 round, thanks.

6 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you, Council Member
7 Levin. We have been joined by Council Members
8 Rosenthal, Miller and Treyger.

9 We are going to move on with questions from my
10 colleagues. We are going to a five-minute clock. We
11 are going to hear first from the Chairs of Public
12 Safety and Criminal Justice. So, we will call on
13 Council Member Richards and then Council Member
14 Powers.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Thank you Chair and
16 thank you to all my colleagues for your work on this
17 important issue.

18 So, one thing that has not really been discussed
19 and it's a glaring area of concern to me is the
20 programming for the detainees at Rikers Island. And
21 Commissioner Brann, you remember me visiting I think
22 last summer or the before, where I had an opportunity
23 to speak to many of the detainees in particular about
24 the programming or lack there of programming being
25 offered to detainees at Rikers Island. Can you just

2 go into to what is the strategy? So, I think you are
3 supposed to provide five hours or somewhat; if you
4 can just speak to that programming to detainees? Can
5 you just speak to what is going on at this current
6 moment at Rikers Island when it comes to programming?

7 CYNTHIA BRANN: Yeah, so, thank you. Programming
8 especially in the new jails is the focus of this
9 Administration and that's why the housing units are
10 being designed the way they are. To allow for
11 programming in every housing unit, so that people can
12 take advantage of that.

13 So, we have been working diligently on creating
14 and offering up to five hours of non-school
15 programming every day to anyone who wants to engage
16 in that. So, being clear, we cannot force anyone to
17 take advantage of programming, but we offer it. And
18 so, for example, with RNDC, we recreated the P-Center
19 that was existing in GMDC when we closed it and we
20 offer auto mechanics and construction. We have a
21 music lab. We have education. We have enhanced
22 recreation for those who which partake in a different
23 way of living their life. They can take classes with
24 cure violence folks with the Fortune Society, with
25 other providers that get them thinking about job

2 prospects and earning certificates in gaining skills.
3 That when they leave our custody, actually could get
4 a job with.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Alright, because I only
6 have a few questions. I just want to be clear that
7 that was not presented by the detainees at Rikers
8 Island to me, when I spoke to them. So, before I
9 could support this specific plan, I need to hear some
10 concrete things on how programming is going to look
11 different and I understand you can't force
12 individuals at Rikers who take advantage of the
13 programming but from their mouths, they are not being
14 offered the necessary programming that they would
15 like to take advantage of.

16 You mentioned Elmhurst Hospital also, in terms of
17 the detainees; the women's facility that is being
18 proposed. Can you speak to any conversations with
19 Elmhurst Hospital that you have had in terms of
20 resources being given to that hospital? If they are
21 going to obviously take in more clientele?

22 DANA KAPLAN: I think we should just clarify -

23 ELIZABETH GLAZER: We presently operate a
24 hospital prison ward at Elmhurst and this program

2 doesn't represent an expansion of what presently
3 exits there.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: But you are expecting
5 more women?

6 ELIZABETH GLAZER: No, actually the current
7 population of females in the department of Correction
8 in custody is around 400 and the projection is that
9 that would be near about 200. So, about a 50 percent
10 reduction in total population.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Okay, but I think there
12 should be some conversations, if there haven't been
13 there. How many Correction Officer jobs do we
14 anticipate we will lose? Will we lose? Will we see
15 any decrease in jobs for Corrections Officers through
16 this process?

17 CYNTHIA BRANN: So, we attrite about 100 staff
18 members every month. We don't expect a change in
19 that over time and as I said, that we have been
20 promised that there would be no layoffs. So, we will
21 keep track of that as time moves forward to see if
22 people are leaving at the same rate.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: So, yes, or no, do we
24 anticipate -

2 CYNTHIA BRANN: It will be a decrease in the
3 total number of officers from the 10,000 that we have
4 now.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Okay and is there a
6 plan to make sure.

7 CYNTHIA BRANN: To attrition.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Okay, and are there any
9 other plans? Have there been any conversations about
10 once Rikers closes, any plans for the current
11 facility? Has there been any conversation that we
12 should be aware of regarding the facility once it
13 closes?

14 DANA KAPLAN: No, because I think Liz can speak
15 to what is under consideration as we think about the
16 opportunity that the closure of Rikers presents.

17 ELIZABETH GLAZER: Sure, so first we'd like to
18 get through ULURP and then we think that there needs
19 to be a very, very full and collaborative process
20 with a lot of input from many, many different groups.
21 Those who have been impacted by Rikers. There are as
22 you know, many, many, different ideas. Some coming
23 from the Council, some coming from other groups and
24 we would anticipate should we be successful getting
25 through ULURP in creating that kind of planning.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: How soon after the
3 ULURP?

4 ELIZABETH GLAZER: Very soon.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Very soon. Okay, I am
6 going to wrap up. I hope that there is a robust
7 community input process for this.

8 ELIZABETH GLAZER: Yeah, absolutely.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: But let me just add
10 that I am hoping that through this process that once
11 again there is a real commitment around the
12 programming because this is supposed to be about
13 rehabilitation and connecting folks once they get off
14 the Island. Well, they won't be on the Island if we
15 pass it back into society to be successful.

16 Let me also add that I hope that we are not going
17 to just be rearranging the chairs on a sinking ship,
18 because that's what Rikers has represented for
19 decades and for my brothers and family members and
20 friends in our communities, this has not been a place
21 that has pushed rehabilitation realistically.

22 So, I am hoping that we're going to do something
23 different here and that this is not the same old song
24 and dance of us just moving people from one place to
25

2 another place with the same exact activities that are
3 happening there now.

4 So, I want to thank the Chair. I look forward to
5 working but once again, I am looking for – just for
6 me, a firm commitment on funding for programming and
7 also, I am looking to see what that programming looks
8 like. So, thank you.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Thanks and thank you for
10 your testimony. I will just pick up right where he
11 left off which is at, I remember this effort starting
12 and the Close Rikers Campaign and it was about
13 obviously closing Rikers down by the name of it but
14 really a process of changing the system. Making you
15 know, the fairer and safer system. You know one
16 glaring thing here in the testimonies is that we're
17 not necessarily proposing programmatic changes as
18 operational changes in addition to the new facilities
19 and I think some in their testimony, we don't want to
20 just change locations, we want to actually have added
21 value to everybody. And that's the people who work
22 there and people who are in the custody as well.

23 So, I want to start there. On the programming,
24 as an example, we still don't get our mandate as I
25 understand in the five hours of programming. We've

2 had conversations around ensuring that people can pay
3 bail or be released after paying bail within the
4 timeframe that we have done. I think that if we are
5 going to be siting new facilities with the goals of
6 looking towards the future and we are not adding in
7 the sort of operational programmatic changes that
8 this whole effort was anticipated where we are sort
9 of rearranging the chairs or changing locations with
10 mission.

11 So, I want to dig into that a little bit. The
12 first one is around safety and in MOCJ's testimony it
13 says, to assign to reduce violence with improved site
14 lines, modern layouts, smaller housing units, better
15 modern practices.

16 Can you provide us clear examples of how for
17 instance site lines or smaller housing units, or
18 better modern practices will make people safer? What
19 in a day to day situation does that actually mean in
20 terms of keeping somebody safe, either employee or
21 somebody who is in custody?

22 CYNTHIA BRANN: So, if you recall the drawing
23 that was up, if you look at modern housing area
24 versus what we have now. What we have now is a
25 linear design and so, you have a large amount of

3 people walking through the housing area and any one
4 given time. And typically, one officer on the floor
5 who has to maintain visual site lines with everybody
6 and what they are doing.

7 In a modern housing area, everything is combined
8 in one location, so that the officer – first of all,
9 it's smaller, less people to keep an eye on. There
10 would be access to recreation, so folks who weren't
11 engaged in programming are inside during the day, not
12 having visits or going to court, would have access to
13 recreation whenever they want.

14 There is program spaces built into each housing
15 area, so that the programs can be delivered in the
16 housing unit. Therefore, if there is an alarm or an
17 emergency somewhere else, the entire facility doesn't
18 shut down. Which causes movement to shut down, which
19 causes programming delivery to shut down.

20 So, if there is no interruption in your housing
21 area, the day can go on as planned. And so, you have
22 an opportunity to reduce idleness number one, and
23 engage in some activities. Number two, you have
24 smaller units, so officers can move around and keep
25 an eye on everyone. You have direct light into the
cell area and the housing area which just creates a

2 more humane environment to be in every day whether
3 you are working or living there. And the housing
4 areas will be wired for use of tablets, individual
5 tablets where programming – if you don't want to
6 engage in a group program, you can do you
7 programming, read a book and do other things on your
8 own tablet.

9 And so, having that ability to have all of our
10 housing areas wired for internet service, we can also
11 do commissary through that. We can do tele-visits
12 through that. We can have email, we can do things
13 that the jails that we have now, we're just not
14 designed for.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Okay, I have follow up
16 questions for you, but I am on a time, so I will
17 continue.

18 The price tag has been brought up obviously
19 around the price tag of locating the siting new
20 jails. I have not heard a lot of talk about cost
21 savings that are achieved through a plan, whether
22 it's our transportation, capital investment into an
23 aging infrastructure right now. Do you have numbers
24 on cost saving anticipated by relocating or else

2 building, new modern facilities and can you share
3 with us what those numbers might look like?

4 BRENDA COOKE: So, I don't have a thorough
5 projection presently of cost savings but I can
6 specially answer your question with respect to the
7 transportation because I think fundamentally you
8 know, a core value that's represented in this program
9 is keeping people close to their communities and
10 close to their courts to their attorneys and services
11 and we know that there is a very high correlation
12 between boroughs of residency and boroughs of court
13 cases and so, with respect to transportation, the
14 Department of Correction presently spends about \$40
15 million on the cost of transportation and that is you
16 know -

17 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: \$40 million annually?

18 BRENDA COOKE: Annually, correct and it's
19 approximately, you know, it can be up to 750 to 1,000
20 people a day that are moved to and from whatever
21 facility they are in, either Rikers or a borough to
22 another borough for court. Because only a small
23 number of people are presently in the borough of
24 their court of arraignment.

2 So, the cost savings there we don't have a
3 specific dollar, but we know they would be
4 significant.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: I don't want to belabor
6 the point. It would be helpful I think, if we also
7 could have an understanding of how much money saved
8 through a plan and also, over the long term as we are
9 building new buildings. That to me, we should
10 anticipate some less need to do patch work, capital
11 improvements onto buildings, in addition to not
12 having air conditioning and other cell doors that
13 don't lock, things like that.

14 BRENDA COOKE: Yeah, and I think much of that and
15 especially as it relates to personal cost, once we
16 have the design build, assuming this ULURP is
17 approved and we have you know, a greater
18 understanding of the design in these buildings and
19 the number of what we refer to as a post, an
20 assignment where we would and on what number of tours
21 the Department of Correction would need to staff
22 areas of the building. We could establish a more
23 concrete understanding of the operational costs from
24 a personal perspective which certainly drives
25 obviously a lot of the ongoing expense.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Okay, I am sorry, this is
3 my last question. This came up earlier, but I just
4 want to ask this again. Is there a plan for how
5 Rikers will be closed and what phases and which order
6 the facilities will be built and operationalized?

7 DANA KAPLAN: So, we're still working through
8 that plan and Jamie can speak from the Department of
9 Design and Construction, but you know, with the
10 ultimate timeline of 2026, I will let him speak to
11 the details.

12 JAMIE TORRES SPRINGER: Thank you. As I stated
13 earlier Council Member, we are working on the plan.
14 I should take the opportunity to mention, it has been
15 brought up a number of times, which is the city has
16 authorization from the state legislature to use the
17 design build approach to build these facilities.
18 This gives us some great advantages in being able to
19 deliver cost effectively and in a timely manner, as
20 well as being able to incorporate innovations and
21 best practices from across the county. Because we
22 really will become the owner of choice for people who
23 would want to come in and deliver high quality
24 facilities.

2 So, because of that, we are working on a program
3 management plan, including a full schedule.

4 Certainly, the schedule incorporates closing Rikers
5 and the barge and opening the four new facilities in
6 2026 and we will be adding further detail to that
7 over the coming months.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: When do we have a
9 completed plan that tells us when new facilities open
10 and facilities are either closed or you start
11 relocating people?

12 JAMIE TORRES SPRINGER: We're working on the plan
13 right now. I can't give a specific timeline.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Can we have it before we
15 vote on it in October?

16 JAMIE TORRES SPRINGER: I am not sure that we
17 will in full, but we can certainly provide you with
18 further details as we develop them.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: I just want to like push
20 you guys a little bit on this one. I mean, there are
21 communities here that are here obviously concerned
22 about what the plans are in their district and I
23 support the plan. I want to be clear about that, but
24 I think that it is a little unfair for us not to have
25

2 information about what the phasing will be like and
3 what the plan will look like.

4 We are here at a land use hearing to talk about
5 this and we don't have clarity on which of these
6 districts will get the facilities, in what order.
7 Not to mention, we have like a woman's facility in
8 Queens that we want to relocate people off of that
9 perhaps quicker. And I do think it's important that
10 the Council and us and the communities that are
11 impacted here have some clarity on what the plan
12 might look like before. In at least the coming weeks
13 or sooner than I think anticipated by the
14 Administration.

15 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you, Council Member.

16 ELIZABETH GLAZER: I just want to add to be
17 responsive to your concerns which we absolutely are
18 mindful of assessing those that are presently in
19 custody and as was discussed at length earlier, the
20 expected continued decline of our population in
21 custody. But there are considerations that you know,
22 are underway and that will continue to be underway as
23 we assess the needs and the housing needs and the
24 risk and the custody requirements of who those
25 specific individuals are at which points and time

2 that drive an assessment of which facilities that are
3 presently in our Criminal Justice system in New York
4 City are necessary in order to support those
5 individuals in the housing and their custody as we
6 move through the design and build of new facilities.

7 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you. We are going to
8 hear now from Council Members Lancman, Grodenchik,
9 Koo, and Gibson.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Good afternoon. As you
11 know, I Chair the Committee on the Justice system
12 which oversees the Mayor's Office of Criminal
13 Justice, and I can say how happy I am today to
14 finally be at his point after we have had so many
15 conversations both in the formal setting of this
16 chamber, as well as informally.

17 And it may not be known to most people, but my
18 district is actually 150 feet or so from where this
19 jail in Queens would be built. So, I have that
20 interest as well.

21 I was a little surprised over the last year or so
22 to see objections being raised to this plan by those
23 who say that they want to close Rikers Island but
24 offer no other meaningful solution for where people
25 would be housed.

2 Can you tell me systemwide, what is the capacity
3 of our current New York City jail system? Rikers and
4 the existing jails in the boroughs? The capacity,
5 not the -

6 BRENDA COOK: Yes, our current beds of standard
7 which are the number of available beds that are on
8 our master facility documents with the state
9 Commission of Correction is approximately 11,000.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: 11,000 and this plan
11 calls for once completed, about 4,600?

12 BRENDA COOKE: Correct.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: So, that represents a
14 substantial reduction in the capacity and the ability
15 of New York City to jail people, correct?

16 BRENDA COOKE: Correct.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Well, that represents to
18 me, I think, an extraordinary accomplishment in
19 making it very, very difficult for future Mayor's and
20 future Councils to go back to a mass incarceration
21 model. And it severely, severely limits the ability
22 of the city to use incarceration as a means of
23 addressing public safety issues.

24 Of the current population, there's about 7,000
25 today?

2 BRENDA COOKE: Correct, correct.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Roughly, how many are
4 from Queens or have Queens cases, which ever way is
5 easier for you to answer that question.

6 BRENDA COOKE: It's about 900 Queens residence.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: 900 Queens residence.
8 And currently none of them are detained in Queens,
9 correct?

10 BRENDA COOKE: The Queens facility is not an
11 overnight housing facility correct, and I just should
12 qualify with the issue of residency. I just want to
13 be clear; residency is self-identified and so, we do
14 have a fair percentage of folks in our custody where
15 we don't necessarily have the borough of residence on
16 record in the Department.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Right, so it's about 700
18 people given that qualification that you just
19 mentioned who are detained somewhere other than their
20 home borough. Why is it important from a criminal
21 justice perspective, from a public safety
22 perspective, for people to be detained as close to
23 home as reasonable possible?

24 CYNTHIA BRANN: The research has shown that
25 maintaining a close contact with your support system

2 in the community that you come from is actually a
3 positive influence and so, when you not only have a
4 support system close by who can come and visit and
5 keep that communication and that support system
6 going, which gives you hope and keeps you motivated
7 to do well and to get out. You also have the
8 available of providers. So, if you have attorneys,
9 or you may have a counselor that wants to come see
10 you where you had connection in the community. They
11 are close enough to come and continue that connection
12 while you are being housed with the DOC.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Now, you have been a
14 Corrections professional for how long?

15 CYNTHIA BRANN: I will just say over 35 years.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Okay, in your
17 professional opinion, does the establishment, the
18 existence of this jail in Queens pose any public
19 safety threat to the people living in that community,
20 to my constituents, some of whom live, as I said,
21 about 150 feet away from where this jail will be
22 built?

23 CYNTHIA BRANN: No.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Alright, alright, thank
25 you very much. I appreciate the partnership and the

2 collaboration that we've had to this point. Rocky as
3 though I sometimes make it. I know we have a long
4 way to go, but I look forward to continuing that.
5 Thank you very much.

6 CYNTHIA BRANN: Thank you.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Thank you Madam
8 Chair. It's no longer good morning, it's good
9 afternoon. I was worried it might get to be good
10 evening. Well, we will be here for a while, right
11 Madam Chair.

12 I have to tell you I am more than a little bit
13 concerned about the inability of this panel that's
14 before us to answer questions this morning.
15 Especially, Deputy Commissioner Torres Springer said
16 these buildings have not yet been designed. Is that
17 an accurate statement? I am remembering what you
18 said accurately, is that a yes?

19 JAMIE TORRES SPRINGER: Council Member, the design
20 hasn't been advanced past the master plan stage,
21 which is the EIS studies.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: So, they haven't been
23 designed, that's what I am hearing and if they
24 haven't been designed, we have had a very, very
25 difficult time to put it mildly getting questions on

2 financing. I am in favor of closing Rikers Island,
3 as most of my colleagues in the Council. But I also
4 am responsible to the taxpayers of the district that
5 I represent, and their property taxes are going
6 through the roof. And you are telling me; when we
7 were here for the preliminary budget hearings led by
8 Chair Dromm, Director Hartzog wouldn't answer or she
9 couldn't answer at the beginning or at the ending
10 hearing and finally, on the Executive Budget, we
11 heard \$8 and $\frac{3}{4}$ billion and now, you are telling me
12 that these haven't been designed. So, how do I have
13 any confidence in taking this vote that these numbers
14 are accurate? We are talking about an incredible
15 amount of money that the city is going to expend. We
16 want people detained by the city to be in humane
17 conditions. We all agree on that, but I do have a
18 great deal of difficulty beyond that with the numbers
19 that you have not really been able to provide.

20 JAMIE TORRES SPRINGER: Thank you, Council Member
21 and I do want to reiterate. We certainly, the
22 Administration shares your concern to make sure that
23 we are adequately budgeting for facilities and
24 responsibly using taxpayer dollars. The cost
25 estimate that served as the basis for the budgeting

2 was done based on the master plan facilities. So,
3 construction professionals are able to take a master
4 plan and create a cost estimate. The thing you want
5 to be careful of at that stage is to make sure you
6 have enough contingency as the design develops. And
7 so, that's the number that we are carrying.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: I don't want to
9 interrupt you but being in and around government for
10 over 30 years, I understand all about contingency,
11 especially work that's done by the City of New York.

12 The question that I have additionally, is last
13 year in my questioning of the Commissioner, it was
14 revealed that it had been at least 29 years since the
15 city has built a new jail facility.

16 So, now, we have been over another year and a
17 half, so it's over 30 years. Who is actually
18 designing this? Have you hired outside people?
19 Because I don't know that there is anybody left from
20 30 years ago.

21 JAMIE TORRES SPRINGER: Sure, so Council Member,
22 as I was mentioning a little earlier, we are very
23 pleased that we have the ability to use the design
24 build method and do want to support the members of
25

2 Council who have helped us with the state legislature
3 to get that ability.

4 So, design build means that we're able to create
5 an integrated team of construction and design
6 professionals, construction managers, engineers,
7 architects, who are able to deliver the project. And
8 to do so, and I wanted to come back to your point
9 about contingency, to do so in a way that we expect
10 to be cost effective.

11 We expect far fewer change orders and cost over
12 runs. We expect far fewer schedule delays. And
13 another advantage of having that ability is, we
14 expect to be able to attract best in class services
15 for those who have delivered criminal justice
16 facilities elsewhere across the country and even
17 around the world. And design build really gives us
18 that capacity to create a team like that. Have a
19 competitive process to attract the best and brightest
20 to come in, finish the design and deliver the
21 facilities.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: I appreciate the
23 design build. I was at the opening of the second
24 span of the Kosciuszko Bridge last week, it looks
25 nice. Hopefully it will cut down on some people's

2 commutes. But I am also concerned and some of my
3 colleagues have touched on this also, that I don't
4 know who is going to be here after the end of 2021.
5 We know that the Mayor is not going to be here, he is
6 term limited. I don't know who the next Mayor will
7 be, she or he. I don't know and it concerns me
8 greatly that we are investing what may turn out to be
9 \$10 billion without a plan that — and you can hear it
10 from my colleagues is a great deal of dissatisfaction
11 this morning, because we don't have all the details
12 and we're going to be asked to vote on this in a
13 very, very short period of time.

14 So, my admonition to you is that we need answers
15 and we need them before we vote. And this is a
16 critical investment that the city is making, and it
17 has to be done with answers. I understand that there
18 are always contingencies in life, but I really don't
19 feel satisfied at this moment as somebody who is
20 supporting this proposal, that we have what we need.
21 And that's not just coming from me but it's also
22 coming from my colleagues whose districts are going
23 to host these facilities and the Chairs of the
24 Committees. And I want to thank — I got eight seconds
25 left. I can talk a lot in eight seconds. I want to

2 thank Chair Adams for indulging me at this time. So,
3 thank you for your answers this morning.

4 JAMIE TORRES SPRINGER: And Madam Chair, if you
5 don't mind, I may just respond quickly to part of the
6 Council Member's last statement.

7 Council Member, we certainly share your concern
8 for the importance of how the process moves forward.
9 I did just want to make a couple of notes. It is
10 true that because we are using design build, there is
11 a level of design that will be advanced after this
12 process. And so, we're thinking very carefully about
13 how to put reviews in place.

14 We are going to be developing a set of design
15 guidelines that will be the subject of the
16 procurement. We've created a design advisory group.
17 The Council is represented on that group as are the
18 borough presidents and other representatives to look
19 at the guidelines as they pertain to how the
20 buildings will fit into their surrounding
21 neighborhoods and communities.

22 We will be taking the designs to the Public
23 Design Commission through their normal process and in
24 the course of doing that, of course, regular updates
25 and briefings for all the elected officials, Council

2 Members, the Community Boards, the Neighborhood
3 Advisory Committees, the Manhattan Joint Task Force
4 that's been created and a lot of stakeholder input
5 and review of the designs as they advance to make
6 sure that they incorporate all that input.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Last question. Are
8 there any state or federal dollars, or is this all on
9 us?

10 DANA KAPLAN: There are no state or federal
11 dollars.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Okay, thank you.
13 Thank you, Madam Chair.

14 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you very much. Council
15 Members Koo, Gibson and Lander.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Thank you Chair Adams. Hi,
17 some groups have serious issues with the draft EIS
18 and [inaudible 4:04:20] statement and have claimed
19 inaccuracies relating to the renderings, height,
20 public impacts, open space analysis and more.

21 So, what is the Administration doing to ensure
22 everyone's voice is heard and respected during this
23 process? And what actions will be taken so that the
24 public can come in on this plan?

2 DANA KAPLAN: I invite Julia from the Deputy
3 Mayor's Office of Operations to speak to this.

4 JULIA KERSON: Thank you, Council Member. We are
5 aware of the accusations that you are referencing.
6 We did take a look at them. Our EIS was prepared in
7 accordance with all of the requirements and is
8 accurate, but I think more to the point of the
9 broader engagement. We understand that folks in the
10 communities are concerned about the height and the
11 bulk of these buildings and as we've said a number of
12 times, we are committed to working with both Council
13 and the communities to meet our criminal justice
14 goals and the vision for this program in as efficient
15 way as possible and to continue to reduce the size
16 and density of these buildings and address the
17 neighborhood concerns.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: So, how are they going to
19 get their voices heard with you?

20 JULIA KERSON: So, we are committed to doing
21 continued community engagement for the duration in
22 following the ULURP process. Obviously assuming
23 ULURP is approved. We are committed to still working
24 and meeting with the Neighborhood Advisory Councils.

2 The Council Community Boards, the Manhattan Joint
3 Task Force and as Deputy Commissioner Torres Springer
4 mentioned, there will be a number of review bodies
5 for design, as well as a structure set up within the
6 Department of Design and Construction, so that
7 community members who have concerns about the impacts
8 during the demolition and duration of the project
9 have a mechanism by which they can communicate to
10 DDC.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: We all know Rikers Island
12 has a lot of problems. That is why we are closing it
13 down, right. So, what is the city doing to ensure
14 that the problems in Rikers will not be replicated in
15 the borough jails? How will you prevent this
16 happening again?

17 JULIA KERSON: So, I think that's a fundamental
18 question and why we acknowledged early on that
19 obviously developing these borough-based facilities
20 are one piece of this, but culture change goes beyond
21 and begins before the facilities themselves.

22 I think that the Department spoke to some of the
23 ways in which they anticipate these buildings being
24 different and changes that are being made now, as
25 well as contemplated for the new facilities. But

2 Commissioner Brann, if there is anything you want to
3 add.

4 CYNTHIA BRANN: So, I would just add that we are
5 positively not the same department that we were five
6 years ago, and we are not waiting for new buildings
7 to change our culture. We've hired over 6,000 new
8 officers. We have provided them with training in
9 crisis intervention and de-escalation techniques. We
10 have provided them with training in mental health
11 first aid. We've developed a new leadership academy,
12 so people can develop their skills at all levels.
13 We've instituted a mentoring program by both officers
14 and captains for people new to their roles as
15 officers and first line supervisors.

16 We have overall transparency in the agency with
17 our data that we did not have five years ago. We
18 publish our data routinely. We share it with the
19 public, we share it with the Council Members, and we
20 use that data to make data driven decisions on how to
21 get better.

22 We are working collaboratively with all of our
23 oversights including City Council, who you all
24 challenge us to think differently, to get better, and
25 we do that. And we have a firm commitment by our

2 executive leadership, both uniform and nonuniform
3 staff to commit to correctional best practices.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Thank you.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you Chair Adams.

6 Happy Birthday, Council Member Koo. Good afternoon.

7 Thank you for being here and giving us a real

8 overview of what this plan calls for. There has been

9 a lot that I have listened to in the past couple of

10 hours, so I want to get to a couple of questions and

11 specifics on the nature of the plan.

12 A lot of my colleagues alluded to the process of

13 how we got here. The community engagement and a lot

14 of things that happened and a lot of things that did

15 not happen.

16 I recognize the Administration has done an

17 incredible amount of work to get to today, but I also

18 know the advocates and many of the groups. The

19 women's organizations did a lot of work as well to

20 get us here today, and so, I really appreciate that.

21 Particularly the details, the criticisms and the

22 critiques and everything put together really to try

23 to get us to a point where there is a balanced

24 approach to this.

2 My first question is, we are talking about an
3 investment of almost \$8 billion dollars. The
4 original plan was ten years. Because of design build
5 we are now down to seven years. Is there a
6 possibility that with design build we could further
7 reduce that timeline, and this is as Council Member
8 Grodenchik mentioned, the first time in a long time
9 that we are building jails. DDC right now has almost
10 30 different agency clients that you work with today
11 on a lot of our big projects and you know, different
12 things of that nature with DOT and others. Is this
13 something that DDC is willing to undertake coupled
14 with some of the other consultants and others that
15 you will bring on board? Is this something that you
16 are ready, willing, and able to manage and oversee?

17 JAMIE TORRES SPRINGER: I think that's for me.

18 So, thank you very much Council Member and for your
19 partnership in all of our work, including this work.
20 I will certainly say we are always looking for ways
21 to build faster and we have as you know, and we've
22 discussed many times over the last year, created a
23 blue print for construction excellence for our agency
24 to deliver faster, more cost effectively while
25 maintaining high standards of quality and so, we will

2 certainly be always looking for efficiencies. This
3 is really our best estimate based on a lot of work
4 about what the overall length of time is to deliver
5 this program. So, we really are sticking with that
6 timeframe.

7 In terms of the capacity of the agency, again, I
8 would go back to the point that design build allows
9 us to really bring in a lot of innovation. One thing
10 we've done in anticipation of a ULURP approval, so
11 that we're ready, is we've brought on board a program
12 management consultant that has a significant amount
13 of capacity to help us set up the program, manage the
14 procurement of the design builders, subsequently
15 manage the design, planning, construction activities
16 and we really believe that by adding that capacity to
17 the very strong capacity of our construction agency,
18 we have a very high ability to deliver this project.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay, and I also share
20 colleagues concerns as it relates to cost savings and
21 other measures that this Council has consistently
22 been talking about. If the population has been
23 reduced from 8,000 to 6,000, you would wonder why the
24 price tag has not changed. And I understand
25 contingency, but I also understand we have at times

2 as an Administration, we've held money to the side
3 that has not been drawn down on. So, I would hope
4 that as we move forward, cost savings is a big
5 priority for us in this plan moving forward.

6 I want to get to specifics. There has been a lot
7 of talk, a lot criticism about how we got here,
8 specifically as it relates to the Bronx site and I
9 also agree with the timeline, as we move forward, we
10 need more specifics. The four boroughs we are
11 talking about, the Bronx is very unique because we do
12 carry the barge every single day. And I agree with
13 my colleague that that has to be taken into
14 consideration if we are talking about doing this in a
15 way that provides equity for all four boroughs.

16 The Sherman Avenue site that has been talked
17 about, that has been analyzed more than once, I just
18 want to do some fact checks to make sure that the
19 Administration did everything possible to analyze
20 this site and make a determination that it was
21 unfeasible.

22 So, the three parcels of land, two of which were
23 state owned, total square footage was about 120,000
24 square feet. Is there or was there a minimum square
25

2 footage that the Administration was looking to
3 satisfy in order to move forward on a site?

4 DANA KAPLAN: So, we didn't have a set number in
5 terms of what the minimum square footage was, but
6 obviously, we were looking at what were sites that
7 would provide a sufficient square footage to
8 accommodate the program. And so, as mentioned
9 earlier, were we to provide the program at the
10 Sherman Avenue site, because of both the awkward
11 configuration but also the small size. It would have
12 been a facility that is more than twice as tall as
13 the current proposed location.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay, as I understand and
15 Chair, if you could just indulge me for a quick
16 second. The original 120,000 square feet, the height
17 would have been 50 stories. When you talk about
18 programming, recreation, outdoor space, services for
19 the medical team, the uniform, the civilian, parking
20 for visitors and staff, that site itself, the three
21 parcels would have been 50 stories. Do you happen to
22 know that if it included the underutilized family
23 court annex, what square footage we were talking
24 about that would be added to the 120,000 of parcel?

2 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: That has to be the last
3 question, Council Member Gibson. Thank you.

4 BRENDA COOKE: I think we can get back to you
5 with more information. I don't have that additional
6 square footage off the top of my head.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay, sorry, I am out of
8 time.

9 DANA KAPLAN: Yeah, and I will just note that
10 that estimate - so, we can get back to you in terms
11 of the specific square footage, but that estimate in
12 terms of that approximate 50 story or over 500 feet
13 was considering the portions of the three sites that
14 we could use, including the family court annex. So,
15 we did actually include that in the analysis.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay, thank you for the
17 clarification. Thank you Chair, I appreciate it.

18 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you. Okay, we are
19 going to hear from Council Members Barron, Rosenthal,
20 Miller and Treyger.

21 COUNCIL MEMBERS BARRON: Thank you, Madam Chair.
22 Thank you to the panel for being here.

23 Neely Fuller said, "if you don't understand White
24 supremacy and racism, everything you think you
25 understand will only confuse you."

3 So, realizing that this countries tenants and
4 origins are based in racism and understanding that
5 the population that fills the jails and the prisons
6 are Black and Brown people who are there because of
7 some stereotypical notions that exist about the
8 inferiority or inhumanity or tendency to be
9 criminals. And judges have said about that criminal
10 tendency from the bench. So, it exists, and I am
11 talking about recently. And understanding that the
12 capitalist nature is to extract as much free or cheap
13 labor as we possibly can.

14 And as we understand that the mass incarceration
15 that came about as a result of the drug wars and that
16 led to the prison, the expansion of prisons under
17 Rockefeller and Carry particularly, exemplified the
18 concept that if you build them, you will fill them.
19 And I am pleased to have heard from Ms. Glazer who
20 said that the less you have, the less you use. That
21 was said here today.

22 So, we need to look at the history of prisons and
23 jails and the detention system in the context of the
24 American history that we are living under to talk
25 about yes, getting rid of Rikers with all of the
problems that it has and has manifested and the

2 culture that exists there. And not just transport
3 that system to smaller institutions, but to look at
4 programs, to look at as has been mentioned,
5 alternatives to incarceration. To look at the bail
6 reform. You know, Judge Bruce Wright was greatly
7 criticized by his colleagues because they called him
8 cut them loose Bruce. Because he said, if bail is
9 only to make sure that the person comes, and if the
10 nature of these crimes are minimal, we're not going
11 to hold them in a jail.

12 And it was a policy that he was the only one that
13 had administered at that time. Everybody else again,
14 judicial discretion allowing judges with their own
15 biases to extract from Black and Brown people that
16 ability to keep them confined.

17 And we've talked about modern and humane system.
18 Humane system would be one where the society provides
19 the education and again, I think Ms. Glazer referred
20 to that. The education that breaks the cycle of
21 poverty. The jobs or opportunities that they need to
22 be able to function in a society. The housing of
23 course, that's needed to be able to have family units
24 and to be able to get that kind of support and that's
25 not happening in the jail system. And my colleagues

2 talked about the requirements for five hours a day.
3 That's not happening, if it were happening, then we
4 would see a greater educational attainment of those
5 who are incarcerated in prison and we would see a
6 reduction in recidivism, and we don't see that.

7 So, we know the feds are not contributing
8 significantly to the situation in terms of allowing
9 for those who are being detained to have access to
10 higher education systems and we have got to find a
11 way to not jump to incarceration. Particularly,
12 since we say, crime is going down, arrests are going
13 down. So, if it's going down, down, down, why are we
14 now talking about this great need to expand the
15 system that will keep people retained?

16 The tenants of this country disproportionately
17 impact Black and Latinos. The penitentiary system
18 came about when slavery ended, so that there would be
19 free labor and convict leasing and as recently as ten
20 years ago, the former Brooklyn Borough President used
21 convict labor when he had his great concerts that
22 everybody loves to go to. He used that. He used
23 those persons to set up the chairs and break down the
24 chairs.

2 So, it still exists, and we know that those who
3 are detained get pennies on a dollar. Pennies for
4 the work that they do, that builds corporations.
5 Again, getting to the capitalist and exploited
6 system.

7 So, I think we've got to look to how we can take
8 these billions and billions and billions of dollars
9 and invest them in those systems that will elevate
10 people, will educate people. Will have students in
11 classes where they are valued as people and as
12 individuals and are taught to respect others in that
13 same light. And are given an opportunity to
14 flourish.

15 So, I had more to say, but that is the summary of
16 what I wanted to say.

17 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you, Council Member
18 Barron.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you.

20 DANA KAPLAN: So, thank you. Thank you Council
21 Member for I think naming race and bringing that into
22 the conversation and I think that the points that you
23 make as part of that are critically important. This
24 is a criminal justice reform efforts are
25 fundamentally at their core, deeply connected to our

2 efforts to address racial injustice and we cannot
3 divorce what the history is of our justice system and
4 we need to acknowledge the disproportionate impact
5 that it has had on communities of color in
6 particularly Black and Latino communities. And you
7 are absolutely right, that that has to be at the core
8 of our work to reform the system.

9 I think it is why so many of the organizations in
10 this room and beyond have elevated this call that the
11 city is very focused on right now for justice reform
12 and towards the closure of Rikers. Is because of
13 that fundamental commitment to racial justice and
14 understanding that if we don't tackle these
15 inequalities in our justice system, we will not have
16 a more just society overall.

17 The one point I do want to make very clear, is
18 that this is – and I think that this came up in
19 Council Member Lancman's questions. This is not an
20 expansion plan. What we are actually talking about
21 is reducing the number of detention facilities in our
22 city from eleven. Eight on Rikers Island and three
23 in the boroughs at over 11,000 beds to a total of
24 4,600 detention beds at four facilities citywide.

3 And so, quite the opposite, if you shrink it,
4 then we will have fewer people touched by the justice
5 system. And so, as we are focused on the closure of
6 Rikers Island and the closure of the barge, it has
7 had all of us put our shoulders to the wheel on all
8 of the things that need to happen to reduce the
9 number of people that come into contact with our
10 justice system and that is why there was over 11,000
11 people who were in detention when this Mayor took
12 office. Why there are around 7,000 today and why we
13 say that we still need to go further. And there is
14 so much work that needs to happen beyond just us on
15 this panel but in partnership with the communities
16 and neighborhoods.

17 And Council Member, thank you. We do have to
18 talk about race and our focus on addressing the
19 fundamental inequities have to be part of this plan
20 and I think it's so important that we keep that at
21 the core.

22 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you, thank you. We
23 need to move on. Council Member Rosenthal.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you and like
25 you, I appreciate Council Member Barron for bringing
up all these issues and of course, shout out to

2 Nicole Hannah Jones in the 1619 project whose making
3 us all aware of the realities of our democracy and
4 what it's based on.

5 I want to ask – my focus as Chair of the
6 Committee on women and gender equity is going to be
7 around what's happening with women, but I think these
8 question could be extrapolated to the larger
9 population as well.

10 In your testimony, you talk about a fairer, safer
11 and more efficient jail system. All words that we
12 embrace, all of us here. Is there a way to
13 understand how the change in infrastructure in the
14 new borough-based facilities and specifically, for
15 the women, how is that physical change from what we
16 have now going to correspond with or by definition
17 inherently result in better policy, a more just
18 policy that we are all looking for? And
19 specifically, we can talk about it in terms of the
20 200 beds for women or however you want to discuss it.
21 Does that make sense, my question?

22 CYNTHIA BRANN: So, I think if you reflect back –
23 I am not sure if you were here when the presentation
24 or not, but the design of the housing unit is a much
25

2 more open space, but a smaller housing unit. So,
3 there are less people in a particular housing unit.

4 We know that women are more relational than men
5 are. And so, they form their own communities in
6 their housing areas. With a smaller number of folks
7 who are in a housing area, with the ability to have
8 programs brought right to their housing area, it
9 enhances their ability to have a successful reentry.

10 We have a myriad of programs designed
11 specifically for the women, that they have asked for.
12 We've listened to their voices. We have a new
13 director of women's programs. We have a director of
14 LGBTQI initiatives and so, we are really focused on
15 their success. Because they come to the criminal
16 justice system through a different pathway and we are
17 addressing those risks.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: We are going to twist
19 it just a little bit. I have heard that. So, does
20 that mean there will be more education rooms built in
21 the facility where there will be women? Does that
22 mean there will be no solitary confinement? So,
23 there will be no rooms for solitary confinement? So,
24 we don't reexperience what happened with Layleen
25 Polanco? Does that mean that the medical ward,

2 medical area will be integrated in some way? Just
3 for the women, for the now I guess you are saying 200
4 beds.

5 CYNTHIA BRANN: So, all of the housing areas are
6 designed to have medical services in the housing
7 units.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: What does that mean?

9 CYNTHIA BRANN: So, our medical providers can
10 come directly to the housing area to provide medical
11 services, do assessments.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: And that doesn't
13 happen now? The physical layout right now at Rikers
14 makes it so that can't happen?

15 CYNTHIA BRANN: The women have to move to the
16 clinic. They have to physically be escorted
17 downstairs to the clinic.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: And what's holding
19 back the medical professionals from coming to their
20 units, the way you are describing right now?

21 CYNTHIA BRANN: Because that is not the way the
22 facility is designed. All the medical equipment, all
23 the services are designed around a localized clinic.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: And so, what's the
25 change in the medical equipment that I can see in

2 passing this ULURP? So, that I can know that this is
3 going to happen. That's what I mean by, how do I see
4 good policy integrated into the infrastructure to
5 know that's going to happen.

6 DANA KAPLAN: So, I am sure that DOC can answer
7 more, but also, Dr. Patsy Yang is here with
8 Correctional Health Services who has also been
9 working very intensely as part of this plan. And so,
10 specific to I think, the difference as it relates to
11 medical services, it might be appropriate for Dr.
12 Yang to speak.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Well, and the very -
14 you know, I am on no time left, so maybe you can get
15 back to me, but specifically I want to understand why
16 the physical layout right now at the Rose M. Singer
17 Center does not allow for what you are envisioning in
18 this new facility for women and I mean, I am sorry, I
19 only have five minutes. I would like to have a
20 second round of questioning because this is the first
21 time that I have heard that the expected number of
22 women is 200, which is fantastic. But you know, that
23 that would be the goal, but I haven't heard about
24 whether or not there is going to be a unit that is
25 independently separate for the women. And whether or

2 not there is a policy that you are contemplating with
3 this ULURP for the women that would change which
4 correction officers will serve the women's
5 population. Whether or not it will shift over to
6 only women. How do I know that as part of the ULURP?

7 COUNCIL CLERK: Before answering, please state
8 your name. Do you affirm that the testimony you are
9 about to give will be the truth, the whole truth and
10 nothing but the truth?

11 PATRICIA YANG: Patricia Yang, yes, I do. Thank
12 you for that question. Although we have not yet
13 arrived at the point of design, the work that's been
14 done so far is really pretty exciting for us. In
15 terms of the new jails are expected to accommodate to
16 a degree that we have not been able to achieve in the
17 current jails because of the constrictions of the
18 facility. More and more therapeutic housing areas
19 where people will be - where our staff will be living
20 and working. Not living but working in the same
21 areas as people are living.

22 So, care, the therapeutic environment, the
23 interactions with the providers, the teamwork between
24 DOC and CHS will be training together, working
25 together as a team, working with our patients. There

2 will be privacy issues built into the construction
3 and the design of the place. It will allow for
4 state-of-the-art equipment. Lines of sight, good
5 therapeutic areas where we can do individual and
6 group counseling actually on the site, in the housing
7 units where people live.

8 DANA KAPLAN: And the one thing that I will just
9 add is you know, as Council Member as you
10 acknowledged, you know, there is aspects of this that
11 will be specific to policy separate from the ULURP
12 itself. So, what I want to just say is that it has
13 been an incredibly helpful and beneficial process for
14 us to have heard from the women's organizations.
15 Both women's service providers and formerly
16 incarcerated women. In terms of informing this plan
17 to date. So, it's certainly why we are now proposing
18 a women's facility and we do know that moving forward
19 there are a lot of different operational questions
20 and considerations, including things like
21 transportation and visiting that we intend to
22 continue that dialog in relationship with these
23 women's organizations. So that they can continue to
24 inform the development of the facility.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Thank you to the Chair
3 for this critical, very important hearing. I just
4 want to just note that we are hearing a lot and
5 reading a lot about numbers and process geography. I
6 just would like to remind folks that we're dealing
7 with human life here. Folks who have not been
8 convicted of a crime who are literally staying in
9 inhumane conditions and I think that we need to have
10 that at the front and center as we approach this
11 critical process and critical vote here in the
12 Council.

13 I am very interested in not just closing Rikers,
14 I am also interested in closing every pipeline that
15 leads to Rikers and to these types of facilities.
16 And as the Education Chair in the Council, I have
17 been very vocal on the need to destroy the school to
18 prison pipeline. In our school system, we have more
19 NYPD agents than social workers, counselors, and
20 psychologists combined and that is what's fueling the
21 pipeline into our justice system.

22 So, the question I have is as we deal with those
23 who are currently in custody, what is the ratio? How
24 many folks are in custody now? How many corrections
25 officers and how many social workers do you have full

2 time based in the facility right now? And to be
3 clear, full-time social workers, because the DOE uses
4 the word called access, not referring people but full
5 time inside.

6 CYNTHIA BRANN: So, we have 7,000 people in
7 custody. We have a staff of 10,000 uniformed
8 officers and that includes at all levels. So,
9 supervisors as well as Corrections Officers and I
10 will have to get back to you on the number of social
11 workers, because not all of that work comes from
12 within DOC and I don't want to give you a wrong
13 number.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: We need to know the
15 number of social workers because this to me is not
16 just about a change of address. It's about a culture
17 change. It's about an entire shift on how we treat
18 human beings and help people and support people and
19 not just fuel a pipeline.

20 So, I just want to just note that to me, I don't
21 just see this issue as just changing addresses,
22 changing locations. I see this as a significant
23 culture shift on how we treat human beings in our
24 city, in our justice system and closing not just
25 Rikers but every pipeline to Rikers and to any of

2 these types of facilities. We should be helping
3 people, supporting people from children to adults.
4 That's what we're about and I thank the Chair for her
5 leadership and her team. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you very much. Council
7 Member Treyger. We're going to yield back since
8 Council Member Levin does have one of the proposed
9 facilities in his district. Council Member Levin.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you Chair. I just
11 have one quick follow up to my last question around
12 additional community investments and programming like
13 alternatives to incarceration, cure violence, etc.

14 Have you done an analysis or are you willing to
15 do an analysis of if you were to make a certain
16 amount of investment, what that could lead to in
17 terms of lowering the overall jail population that
18 would result? I mean, is it difficult - I imagine be
19 difficult to do in a rigorous, statistical way but
20 have you made any attempt to examine that question?

21 CYNTHIA BRANN: So, it's something that we work
22 on all the time. It's what the background and
23 backbone has been of the investment that we've made
24 so far. I think we are entering into a period where
25 bail reform is going to have a very, very significant

2 effect on all pieces of the criminal justice system
3 and the intersection between the criminal justice
4 system and more civilian infrastructures.

5 And so, that makes it very, very difficult to say
6 with any certainty what the result of one thing will
7 be as opposed to another.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: But knowing the
9 effectiveness of programs that are evidence based,
10 there is some confidence that the more programs there
11 are and the more communities that those programs are
12 in, for example, Cure Violence, if it was in every
13 community, it would have an impact presumably.

14 CYNTHIA BRANN: Right, we're always looking for
15 the evidence base. We want to invest in things that
16 we think will result in positive results for people
17 and that's an ongoing effort and a complicated one
18 that I would be happy to talk to you about.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay, thank you very much.
20 Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you, Council Member
22 Levin. Panel, thank you so much for sticking it out
23 with us for almost four hours today. We appreciate
24 your time. We've got lots more questions. As you
25 know, there were a number of questions that were not

3 answered. To mine or my colleagues liking today, to
4 our specifications but hopefully, over the upcoming
5 weeks, we can get there.

6 We are going to excuse you at this time. Thank
7 you again.

8 ELIZABETH GLAZER: Thank you Chair for your
9 courtesy and we look forward to working with you
10 going forward.

11 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you. We are going to
12 go into the public panel session. For everyone that
13 is tested, there will be no Woo's. For everyone that
14 is coming up to testify for the public segment, we of
15 course welcome all of your testimony. I must be
16 candid with you, we have approximately 200 people
17 signed up for this hearing today to testify on the
18 public front.

19 So, we are going to be sure that we hold steady
20 to a two-minute clock. We have a number of people
21 outside waiting to get inside, so I am going to ask
22 everyone that is testifying on our two-minute clock
23 to please leave quickly upon the conclusion of your
24 testimony.

25 Once again, everyone that is coming up to
testify, and if you do not need to stay, please

2 testify on our two-minute clock. We will make sure
3 the clock is going to be steadfast. We are going to
4 hold it. So, we need you to testify and we need you
5 to exit the chambers immediately upon conclusion of
6 your testimony today.

7 If anyone has extensive testimony that the two
8 minute clock will not allow, we encourage you to
9 email your testimony, your complete testimony to
10 hearings@council.nyc.gov or give it to the Sergeant
11 at Arms before you leave today and the subject line
12 would be borough based jails.

13 Once again, the email is hearings@council.nyc.gov
14 subject line borough-based jails, if you cannot
15 adhere to the two-minute clock, that will be adhered
16 to this afternoon. Thank you for your cooperation.

17 We're calling the first public panel. Marco
18 Barrios, Donna Hilton, Marvin Mayfield and Anna
19 Pastoressa[SP?]. Please step up quickly.

20 Please step up quickly, we will assume you are
21 not here if you do not step up. Thank you.

22 You may begin. Please start the clock. You may
23 begin.

2 State your name for the record and be sure to
3 turn the microphone on, so that you see the red light
4 prior to beginning.

5 ANNA PASTORESSA: Hi, my name is Anna Pastoressa.
6 I am a member of Just Leadership USA. I am speaking
7 in support of building borough-based jails facility
8 to make sure that Rikers closes as quickly as
9 possible. There are also a number of ways that the
10 Mayor plan needs to be improved. Improvements that
11 you all City Council, have the power to make.

12 I have living in the lower Manhattan District 1
13 for over 35 years and my son was incarcerated on
14 Rikers Island for six years, from 2010 to 2016
15 waiting for trial.

16 Visits did not come easily at all. We were
17 traveling far away for so many hours and we endured
18 timeless mistreatment and abused by Corrections
19 Officers when we were going to visit him. I do not
20 believe that anyone should be locked up, waiting for
21 trial for six years. And as a member of Just
22 Leadership USA, and a leader of the Free New York
23 Campaign, I helped win state reforms that passed in
24 Albany this year. Which will keep tens of thousands
25 of peoples out of jail across New York State.

2 My son, for example, was remanded before his
3 trial. While anyone is still detained, the people
4 must be given the opportunity to be near the house,
5 near home, community, near their family, and to give
6 attorney's the possibility to visit them quickly
7 without enduring any abuse.

8 I also ask that the City of New York commit to
9 replacing City sentences with alternatives to
10 incarceration and to divert in people with serious
11 mental illnesses to appropriate programs. By doing
12 that, you can plan for more reduced jail population
13 of less than 3,000 in the next few years.

14 I do have great concern about the Department of
15 Corrections running any facilities where people would
16 be housed. While we move forward, we shrinken the
17 jail population. We must also move forward with a
18 plan for the Department of Corrections to be removed
19 from running new facilities. That's the way not to
20 recreate small Rikers Island in the City.

21 DOC is too corrupted and like Rikers, is beyond
22 repair. Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you, thank you very
24 much.

2 MARVIN MAYFIELD: Good afternoon. My name is
3 Marvin Mayfield and I am a lifelong New York City
4 resident, and I am also a survivor of Rikers Island
5 and the boat.

6 I am here to show my support for the closure of
7 both of them. Moving quickly to end the torture of
8 Rikers Island is the right thing to do. We are
9 already too late for the people who have died there.
10 The people who have suffered there and the people who
11 are still suffering there. And just like lobotomies
12 and bloodletting in the medical profession, Rikers
13 Island is a two of a bygone era which has proven
14 noneffective. And that includes the Vernon C. Bain
15 Detention Center, also know as the boat, which is a
16 modern-day slave ship. Which is supposed to be a
17 temporary fix when the jail population was at about
18 22,000.

19 I am here today as a Veteran who served my
20 country. Not only a person who was incarcerated and
21 directly affected, but as a Veteran and I experienced
22 the horrors of the boat and Rikers Island. I am an
23 advocate who fought for pretrial reforms that will
24 help get thousands of people across this state home
25 to their families. The word patriot has lost some of

2 its appeal, but that's who I am. I fight for what I
3 believe in and I believe that the way we treat the
4 least of us is the way we will recognize the best of
5 us.

6 Like advocates we are working on multiple things
7 at the same time and we also expect our city to do
8 the same.

9 We are working on more reforms and advancing and
10 improving expanded programs within these new
11 facilities. The time to close Rikers Island has
12 passed, but the best time to do it is now. Thank
13 you.

14 DONNA HILTON: Good afternoon. Thank you for
15 having us Council. My name is Donna Hilton and I am
16 here as a directly impacted woman. I served 27 years
17 in New York States maximum security prison for women.
18 Therefore, I spent 13 months of that time on Rikers
19 Island as an adolescent. And I went through the most
20 horrific, egregious, cruel and inhumane treatment
21 that I can ever experience in my life on Rikers
22 Island.

23 And so, I have heard this morning a lot of
24 conversations about building height, aesthetics, what
25 it would like, what we need, and I just want it to be

2 very clear that those of us here in this room, we
3 have led this charge from the beginning. It was
4 those of us who said close Rikers Island. Not anyone
5 else in this room.

6 And so, we have been fighting for this for years
7 and we will continue to fight for this because we are
8 your neighbors, your friends, the people that sit
9 beside you in restaurants, on the train, on the bus.
10 We are here as taxpayers, we own businesses, we have
11 property. We are here as individuals and human
12 beings. And I understand the argument about it being
13 a building, but we have to remember people. We are
14 people first and if we don't recognize how we are
15 treating people or not treating people, then we are
16 not going to get anywhere.

17 This is 2019, not 1619 and I understand, we
18 understand, unequivocally that people commit crimes.
19 But we have to look at the root causes of why people
20 commit crimes. We are all responsible, we are all
21 responsible for poverty, for discrimination, for
22 sexism, for racism, all of those isms that continue
23 to isolate us and to oppress us.

24 So, if we don't come together as a people, we
25 will continue this culture of violence and abuse no

2 matter where it is. And I agree with a lot of things
3 that have been said. It is not about where the
4 building is, it's about who is running it. And I do
5 not agree with DOC's running the building. Why,
6 because they were my worst abusers.

7 MARCO BARRIOS: My name is Marco Barrios. I am
8 resident of Queens and a member and leader of Just
9 Leadership USA and Close Rikers Campaign.

10 I urge the City Council to pass this plan to
11 create community-based facilities. So that we can
12 set a real plan in place to close Rikers. In the
13 course of my incarceration on two occasions, I was
14 sent to Rikers Island to protect my rights to see my
15 daughter. On both occasions, the conditions at
16 Rikers Island were so horrific that I wanted to go
17 back as soon as possible to the maximum-security
18 prison that I came from. I couldn't believe the
19 treatment of a human being by a criminal justice
20 system.

21 Now, I am aware that the new buildings will not
22 fix all of the problems in our criminal justice
23 system, but they can be the start of progress by
24 bringing people closer to their lawyers, families and
25 services. By moving the facilities into places where

3 real oversight is possible and by creating physical
4 spaces for the kinds of programs and care that are
5 needed.

6 For the past few months, I have been engaged as a
7 member of the Mayor's Justice Implementation Task
8 Force as part of the Subcommittee on Programming. In
9 that role, I have advocated, and I will continue to
10 advocate for a comprehensive and effectively
11 rehabilitated model for everyone who is still
12 detained with transparency and accountability to see
13 this approach is correctly implemented.

14 When anyone is still detained, I say that because
15 our focus is decarceration and shrinking the criminal
16 justice system. Due to the reforms we already
17 achieved and the further changes we know are possible
18 to our advocacy the next few years, the city has
19 reduced a plan capacity to for the facilities from
20 5,000 to 4,000 and we know they can be planning for
21 less than 3,000 in the next few years.

22 Last and not least, closing Rikers and shrinking
23 our jail system will put us on a path to save over
24 \$500 million annually. The city can invest those
25 saving on the kinds of community resources online in

2 our build communities platform and we will be there
3 to advocate for that. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you all so much for you
5 passionate testimony and for sticking with us today.
6 We really appreciate it, thank you.

7 PANEL: Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Okay, the next panel is Evan
9 F. Bacardi[SP?], Deputy Borough President of the
10 Bronx Marricka Scott-McFadden, Howard Collins and
11 Alfred Brand.

12 You may begin whenever you are ready.

13 EVAN BACARDI: My name is Evan Bacardi. Unlike
14 most here today, I will not approach this sensitive
15 topic with frustration and anger. I simply speak my
16 peace. As elected officials, you are sworn to a
17 compact between our representative government and the
18 citizens of New York. You promise to listen to the
19 will of our people.

20 I submit that throughout this entire process, in
21 the interest of speed, legal obligations and due
22 diligence on the part of our government has been
23 subverted. The compact of trust between the
24 government and the people has been violated. We
25

2 trust you to be stewards of our land, our tax
3 dollars, our people, and of justice.

4 This proposed project has been rushed through for
5 motivations that are yet unknown. Roughly \$10
6 billion of our taxpayer money will go to build these
7 jails. With nothing being done to address the human
8 rights violations within the walls of the jails
9 themselves.

10 Without this reform, no progress can be made, and
11 we ultimately wind up poorer. Morally and physically
12 bankrupt. I submit this to you; you are not under
13 any pressure to prove this plan put into motion by
14 the most unpopular Mayor of New York City that we've
15 seen in 30 years, but we need to help those left
16 behind by the world. More jails is not the answer.
17 This is an old way of thinking. If you spend the \$10
18 billion in the poorest districts of our city on
19 education, on housing and recidivism programs, you
20 shall ensure that our fellow New Yorkers never again
21 wind up behind cold steel bars. Start this process
22 again and let the public guide you on how those funds
23 can be put towards the greater good instead of
24 inhumane cages. Thank you.

25 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Next person please.

2 MARRICKA SCOTT-MCFADDEN: Good afternoon and
3 thank you for having me here today. I am Marricka
4 Scott-McFadden. I am the Deputy Bronx Borough
5 President and I am here on behalf of Bronx Borough
6 President Ruben Diaz Jr. to discuss the de Blasio
7 Administrations wrong headed proposal to build a new
8 jail in Mount Haven.

9 The only thing that stands in the way of this
10 dramatic mistake, one that will negatively affect the
11 Bronx for decades to come are you and your colleagues
12 on the City Council. I hope that you will act to
13 protect the Bronx and its residence from the
14 consequences of poor planning and political
15 expediency. I must be clear, Rikers Island must be
16 closed. It is an abomination and a stain on the soul
17 of our city. But that closure should be handled in
18 the right way.

19 The necessity to close this prison does not
20 excuse the de Blasio Administration selection of the
21 wrong site for the new jail in the Bronx. 320
22 Concord Avenue which is currently operating as a city
23 owned tow yard. Instead, the Administration has
24 weaponized a land use process against the Bronx in
25

2 order to protect their plan to build a new jail on
3 the wrong site.

4 Mount Haven and its residence of Diego Beekman
5 have fought for decades to overcome the crime, drugs,
6 despair, and abandonment that plague their
7 neighborhood. They rolled up their sleeves to turn
8 it back into a livable community it is today. And I
9 am adamantly opposed to the burden the proposed
10 borough-based jail, for my borough will place on the
11 communities; poorest urban communities.

12 Unfortunately, this site ignores both their hard
13 work and the Lippman Commissions proposal to place
14 borough-based jails near courthouses. Instead of
15 reaching out to the community and engaging on this
16 site selection, the Administration has decided to
17 impose a monolithic oppressive structure adjacent to
18 a community of reclaimed apartments, homes and
19 schools in the name of political expediency.

20 You, members of the City Council have the ability
21 to right this absurd wrong and force the city to
22 select a better site for the new Bronx jail.

23 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you.

24 MARRICKA SCOTT-MCFADDEN: Thank you.

2 [INAUDIBLE 21:57]: Hi, good afternoon. This is
3 Semonick[SP?] from [Inaudible 22:03] Institute.

4 Basically, I am just trying to state that this
5 system has been handed down from a let's say a
6 privileged class that has instituted a prison system
7 that hasn't worked for us at all.

8 As far as the city, as far as a nation, we have
9 the highest incarceration rate. So, to have people
10 come back and forth through prison systems is very
11 enduring and it's also on our taxes that we are using
12 and we're not getting anything out of it.

13 So, for every person in the skim of this, not
14 just the persons that are suffering but you know, the
15 taxpayers to the people sitting here before us, we
16 have to something that is going to work. Which is
17 you know, proposed rehabilitation centers and let's
18 say, inhouse schools, where people are actually, you
19 know, if they sell drugs or something that they can
20 actually get some skills and go out there and get a
21 job and not come back.

22 So, the thing is that the system is putting out
23 so much money and nothing is coming out of it. So,
24 it's obviously a failed system. It's not even a
25 polite to keep it around. It's like, how soon can we

2 get a new plan in should be the real discourse of
3 this all because it's a failed system. If we go to
4 other countries around the world, we see plenty of
5 systems that are not geared to just you know, a
6 couple races like this and they work. They work for
7 everybody in the nation and they reduce the crime
8 rates, as in Netherlands and a few other countries in
9 Europe.

10 So, it's a matter of us getting a grip on the
11 understanding of how we are going to move forward to
12 institutionalize a better system that works and not
13 something that keeps on messing up and actually
14 poses risks. Because people that go in there are
15 grouped with the wrong people a lot of the time and
16 there is no comprehensive care or nature towards it
17 that we are seeing. These are our neighbors, you
18 know, these are our children, like somebody said
19 earlier. Thank you very much.

20 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you. Can you just
21 state your name for the record.

22 SAMANICH: Samanich[SP?], yeah, I saw the
23 opening.

24 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Did we call you up for this
25 panel?

2 HOWARD KOLINS: Yeah, I was in the bathroom.

3 Howard Kolins, I heard my name. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Right, we didn't call you up
5 for the panel. We called you up for the panel,
6 Howard.

7 ALFRED BRAND: Okay, my name is Alfred Brand. I
8 am Chairman of the Kew Gardens Civic Association. An
9 organization that has been a continuous existence
10 since 1914 and is sought out by all elected officials
11 for our input. There was no community association,
12 civic association, residence association, used to
13 provide input for the Lippman Commission report of
14 the subsequent work by the city to develop the
15 borough-based jail system before it was dropped on
16 the public with glossy brochures.

17 There is a no community input that is significant
18 and for that reason, the ULURP application has to be
19 denied. This has not met the standards of ULURP.

20 On technical matters, there are buildings at
21 Rikers that are only 30 years old. Rosie is the name
22 of one of them. These buildings are described as
23 terrible places. They are not terrible places
24 because they are 30-year-old buildings, they have to
25 be because they are poorly maintained and poorly

2 administered. What guarantee do we have that
3 building new jails and moving the same administration
4 into the new jails is going to be any different?

5 The brochures that we've seen and the power
6 points that we show from the city show recreation
7 space, outdoor recreation spaces described. Yet the
8 little peripheral area is a small area within a
9 building, and it's described by the city as an
10 outdoor recreation space. These descriptions by the
11 city are meaningless because they have no basis. In
12 fact, the buildings have not been designed. We have
13 no assurance that the communities will be satisfied,
14 and we have no assurance that the inmates who
15 ultimately will occupy these spaces will be properly
16 serviced.

17 For those reasons, I believe that the ULURP
18 application must be denied.

19 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you. Howard Kolins,
20 are you speaking?

21 HOWARD KOLINS: Yes. Thank you. My name is
22 Howard Kolins, I am the President of the Boerum Hill
23 Association and the Brooklyn jail is in Boerum Hill.

24 I represent about 12,000 residents in the
25 neighborhood. I was a member of the Brooklyn NAC and

3 my neighborhood understands and agrees with the moral
4 imperative to close Rikers.

5 It has to be done. At the same time, I say that,
6 we are having a big struggle with the proposal as is
7 that will double the size of the jail. It will be a
8 skyscraper of detention, a monument incarceration, an
9 insult to Brooklyn and the entire city. We are
10 suggesting and FAR of eight to ten, not 16.36.

11 We want to know, it came up in the hearing, it
12 was mentioned, psychiatric services, mental health
13 issues. There is an RFP being put out, but we have
14 been asking in the NAC about numbers, about sizes.
15 If the current system, its been said that 1/3 of the
16 prisoners have mental health issues and half of that
17 third have severe issues, why aren't they out of the
18 system now for their safety and the safety of the
19 people who work there?

20 I am going to hand in my written comments, but I
21 have one more suggestion for the City Council.
22 Please take heed. At some point Rikers, this will
23 happen, we will empty Rikers and there will be a big
24 chunk of land. I am suggesting that any sale, lease,
25 construction and resulting property taxes be put into
a fund dealt with as pilots and those funds go to the

2 communities that have the highest crime rates.

3 Funding education, homeless outreach, substance
4 abuse, and any other program that cuts off the need
5 to incarcerate people. Build communities, not bars.

6 [UNIDENTIFIED]: Thank you for the courtesy Chair
7 Adams. Howard, thank you and Boerum Hill Association
8 and all the members of the Brooklyn NAC who have
9 given a tremendous amount of time and thought and
10 conscientious effort to a constructive process. So,
11 I hear your concerns loud and clear and look forward
12 to continuing to work with you over the next several
13 weeks. Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you. Thank you, panel.
15 The next panel up Alethea Taylor from the Lippman
16 Commission. I think the Judge left. Oh, hi Judge.
17 I would so want everyone to applaud for you, but I am
18 not allowed. Judge Jonathan Lippman. [GAVEL] Thank
19 you, thank you. Herb Sturz, Stanley Richards, and
20 Seco Shecore[SP?].

21 Please come up quickly. Panel, please remember
22 to state your name for the record prior to speaking
23 and please be mindful of the two-minute clock. You
24 may begin.

2 JUDGE JONATHAN LIPPMAN: Good morning, good
3 afternoon. I am Jonathan Lippman, the Chair of the
4 Rikers Commission and we've been building this
5 roadmap for two and a half years and in two minutes,
6 what can I tell you. What I can tell you is that
7 we're at a crossroads critical to the future of New
8 York City. We will either close this miserable,
9 horrible place forever or these shameful jails will
10 continue to exist and harm New Yorkers for decades to
11 come.

12 I would ask you to just consider a few basic
13 things as you deliver it. First of all, there is
14 wide support for this plan. A commission to the poll
15 that showed almost 60 percent of New Yorkers support
16 closing Rikers and building local jails. We can get
17 the population down to 4,000, we have proven that. A
18 couple of decades ago, it was 22,000 people. Now,
19 it's 7,000 and with fewer people in jail, New York is
20 as safe as it's ever been. We have proven that
21 justice reform and public safety can go hand and hand
22 and they are not mutually exclusive.

23 Finally, what I'd stress to you is that there is
24 no viable path to closing Rikers that doesn't include
25 borough-based facilities. You can argue the detail

2 of it, the height, the sites, all of those things,
3 but rejecting this plan will mean Rikers continues to
4 exist for generations to come. That's what will
5 happen and that cannot be our legacy. This in the
6 end is a moral issue for Rikers Island jails, this
7 proportionately impact Black and Brown communities
8 and they are in a front to humanity. They are an
9 accelerator of human misery. They hurt public
10 safety, don't help public safety and you can't make
11 it better; you can only go around the edges. We must
12 shut Rikers and once and for all remove this stain
13 from the soul of New York City. Thank you so much.

14 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you Judge.

15 ALETHEA TAYLOR: My name is Alethea Taylor and I
16 am in support of the borough-based facilities plan.
17 I am a former Executive Director of Greenhope
18 Services for women that provides trauma informed care
19 for justice involved women. I am a member of the
20 commission; I also consult with the New York Women's
21 foundation. I have also worked on Rosie's; the
22 women's jail and I am a family member of a formerly
23 incarcerated individual.

24 My focus today is about women. 80 percent of
25 women in jail are mothers to young children. The

2 overwhelming majority of women in jail have extensive
3 histories of childhood and adult physical and sexual
4 and emotional abuse. Many have substance use and
5 mental health needs. They need success and
6 attainment, not containment.

7 Rose M. Singer Center cannot provide adequate
8 trauma informed care or healing to those women
9 including women with children on Rikers. It's very
10 physical environment prevents it. Furthermore,
11 Rikers isolation makes it incredibly difficult for
12 women to maintain contact with their children and
13 other family members. Worse, the horrific prevalence
14 of sexual assault on Rikers and the lack of
15 accountability for it.

16 Clearly, we need to do everything to make sure
17 few women as possible ever end up in jail. We have
18 much better options like organizations associated
19 with the Women's Community Justice Project with a
20 record of helping women get the care they need with
21 low recidivism. The city should invest heavily to
22 grow programs like this. We must properly support
23 those who are incarcerated, keeping them safe, give
24 them the tools to get out.

2 Women should be housed together in a single
3 facility such as the suggestion of Lincoln
4 Correctional Facility. This is a once in a lifetime
5 chance to turn hope into reality. The alternative of
6 doing nothing or waiting for a better plan is
7 unacceptable. If this fails, we condemn countless
8 women to this continued humane problem at Rosie's.
9 Thank you and I hope you support this plan.

10 STANLEY RICHARDS: Good afternoon. My name is
11 Stanley Richards. When I was young, I spent about
12 ten years behind bars for the harms I caused to my
13 community including two years on Rikers Island.

14 When I came home from prison, I dedicated my life
15 to helping people like me succeed on a different
16 path. Today, I am the Executive Vice President of
17 the Fortune Society. Vice Chair of the New York City
18 Board of Correction and a member of the Lippman
19 Commission.

20 I know the hell of Rikers, and I know it has to
21 be closed and it has to be closed now. Every day it
22 stays open is a day our loved ones and neighbors are
23 harmed. That goes for the people who are
24 incarcerated there, for those who have to visit their
25 loved ones and for those that have to work in those

2 facilities. For who all of them, most of them, are
3 people of color.

4 We need drastic action right now to change the
5 dynamics of the jails that we currently have. We
6 cannot wait, we cannot wait. Shutting Rikers and
7 replacing it with borough-based system is our best
8 chance to get a handle on this unacceptable level of
9 violence in our jails and to hold everyone
10 accountable to make sure that our jails are safe.

11 With a much smaller system, so much of the money
12 we now spend on the Department of Corrections can be
13 invested in the communities and the community that I
14 come from Soundview Projects. We can invest in
15 schools, mental health, substance abuse treatment and
16 diversion programs. We could do better than we are
17 currently doing. We must do all we can so that
18 people never go to jail in the first place. Then
19 imagine this, imagine that we use Rikers for good.
20 Imagine putting green infrastructure out there. We
21 could close the power plants in Queens, in Bronx at
22 that spew out pollution and hurry out children. We
23 could stop thousands of gallons of human waste.

24 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you.

25 STANLEY RICHARDS: That enter our water.

2 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you.

3 STANLEY RICHARDS: We can close Rikers and do it
4 now.

5 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thanks very much. I would like
6 to acknowledge we've been joined by Council Member
7 Holden. Please begin.

8 SECO SHICORE: Good afternoon. My name is Seco
9 Shicore and I am a case manager at Bronx Connect.
10 For the last five years I have been actively involved
11 in all things relative to criminal justice and
12 criminal justice reform.

13 I spent 34 years in Department of Corrections. I
14 have been at every maximum-security prison in the
15 State of New York. I am noted between an overly
16 populated facility poorly ran and a small facility
17 where it takes more interest and programming and
18 therapeutic services.

19 Obviously, we're going to close Rikers Island,
20 it's what we do with the people inside. So, we look
21 at the smaller facilities, staff will have more
22 opportunity to get to know people, see them as human
23 beings. The prisoners will not be worried about the
24 more violent behavior that's going to take place in
25 there, to get people more freely about going to

2 school, be involved in programs. I know the
3 difference. When I go to Attica for the first time
4 and get off the bus, someone is picked out and
5 someone's beaten up and brought them to Attica. I go
6 to a place like Eastern, you get off the bus, welcome
7 to happy nappy; it's a big difference. A small
8 facility with more funding and different people are
9 in charge of the programs.

10 I believe based on my personal experience that
11 closing Rikers Island is definitely something that we
12 need to do in our communities and the small
13 facilities are more better for the community in
14 large.

15 You hear people upstate in the communities
16 talking about - they are worried about their property
17 taxes going down and Dana **[INAUDIBLE 46:44]** and
18 Sullivan in no places. They are not concerned about
19 that because it doesn't happen. They are concerned
20 about public safety, because that doesn't happen
21 neither. People aren't escaping from communities
22 through prisons. That rarely happens. It wouldn't
23 happen in the Bronx, Queens, Brooklyn, Manhattan
24 neither. So, that's not a concern that we should be
25 worried about. We should be worried about what kind

2 of services that people in prison are going to have.

3 Thank you.

4 HERB STURZ: Good morning, good afternoon. My
5 name is Herb Sturz and I am testifying behalf of the
6 Lippman Commission.

7 In 1961, I cofounded the very Vera Institute of
8 Justice and then served as Deputy Mayor for Criminal
9 Justice and Chair of the City Planning Commission.

10 I am testifying today because New York is close
11 to ending the odious pretrial penal colony on Rikers
12 Island. The four borough-based jails that would be
13 authorized by this application are essential to this
14 effort. Without the site selection approval, nothing
15 will happen.

16 This is not an easy decision, but City Council is
17 not used to easy decisions to make, but I also know
18 the Council appreciates the urgency of supporting an
19 effective alternative to Rikers Island. In the 70's
20 and 80's the city sought to shutdown Rikers for the
21 same reasons that exist today. Now, we have a chance
22 to close Rikers once and for all. I know the Council
23 has some concerns about the unique approach of
24 designing and building the new jails, but I believe
25 the city responded to that very adequately this

2 morning. Strategies now are being developed by women
3 and men of good will to enjoy, ensure vigorous
4 community engagement as design progresses for each
5 site. Without the Council's approval, we will lose
6 the opportunity to rectify what Rikers has become.
7 An egregious injustice itself undermining our great
8 city. It's really now or never. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you all very much.
10 Thank you very panel.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Hi everybody, I am Council
12 Member Stephen Levin. I am going to take over
13 chairing for a few moments to allow our Chair
14 Adrienne Adams to grab a bite to eat.

15 The next panel in opposition, Silvia Hack Queens
16 Community Board 9, Ida Vernon Queens Residents
17 United, Charlotte Picot Forest Hills South,
18 Christopher Marte, Neighbors United Below Canal and
19 State Assembly Member Ulene New[SP?], Assembly
20 District 65.

21 Okay, whoever wants to begin. I am sorry, is Mr.
22 Marte in the room? Okay, whoever wants to begin.

23 SILVIA HACK: Hello, my name is Silvia Hack and I
24 am representing Queens Community Board 9.

3 There has been absolutely no community
4 involvement in the design or thought for this jail.
5 There are also a lot of fairy tales that you've heard
6 here and this ULURP is a travesty because you don't
7 know what you are going to get. Because ULURP is
8 based upon having a design, having a plan, knowing
9 about the programs and not just hoping for the very
10 best. And that is a travesty because the uniform
11 land use review procedure is the only procedure in
12 this city that communities have to try to keep their
13 communities strong, vibrant and improved. And you
14 don't know what you are going to get from this and
15 that is a travesty.

16 And in terms of some of the things I have heard
17 here, which started with lies from the Department,
18 the Mayor's Department of Criminal Justice. On
19 September 20, 2018 when the Deputy Mayor testified to
20 my stunned surprise that when asked about community
21 involvement, she made the statement that there was a
22 significant amount of meetings, both open and closed
23 with the communities and the neighborhoods. Well,
24 let me tell you, it may be for some other borough,
25 but it never happened for Queens. The only meeting,
we had when we were presented with a fairy tale look

2 of these beautiful sketches was a meeting that our
3 City Council woman had called, in which there were
4 eight or nine of us present. That is not what I call
5 a significant amount of community involvement, both
6 open and closed etc.

7 So, no one here has really ever raised the point
8 about what does this mean for the communities that
9 are hosting this. Kew Gardens, which is a part of
10 the board, is a 100-year-old community and I don't
11 know that anybody here actually believes that a jail
12 really winds up integrated with the community,
13 particularly when the city has totally ignored that
14 community.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you very much for
16 your testimony.

17 IDA VERNON: Okay, hello, good afternoon. My
18 name is Ida Vernon and I am a member of Queens
19 Residents United.

20 This group represents neighborhoods in Queens,
21 such as mine, that will be impacted by the 30 plus
22 story, 1.9 million square foot mega jail that Mayor
23 de Blasio wants built in Kew Gardens. This is the
24 biggest jail that's planned by footprint.

2 I am not here to oppose the closing of Rikers. I
3 am here to ask the City Council to vote against this
4 ill conceived and incredibly expensive jail plan that
5 some of us call jail gate. A plan that will divert
6 vital resources away from communities.

7 The one thing that this jail plan is guaranteed
8 to do is to enrich well connected builders and others
9 that stand a profit from high-rise jail construction.

10 The Mayor wants the City Council to rubberstamp
11 this scheme. The City Council needs to check on the
12 Mayor, who is accountable to all of us, the people in
13 the City of New York as the Council is. The jail
14 plan is the product of an undemocratic process that
15 excluded residents of the neighborhoods chosen for
16 mega jails. It came out of backroom meetings of an
17 establishment including some of the individuals who
18 testified here and with all do respect, the Lippman
19 Commission. To these folks, we are just specs on the
20 New York City map. There has been no meaningful
21 outreach to our communities contrary to what they
22 tell you and this four in one ULURP process is
23 inadequate to evaluate a plan that is as much or more
24 about people than it is about buildings.

2 Of course, we the people who live in the
3 communities where the jails are planned care about
4 our communities. We have to because no one else
5 does. The Mayor doesn't, he made that clear in a
6 meeting months ago in Queens when he waved away our
7 concerns.

8 And up until this point, I think that the four
9 Council Member, who I understand who represent the
10 districts, as well as my own Council Member Mr.
11 Lancman, who just for the first time today
12 acknowledged that it's across the street from my
13 neighborhood, they have [Inaudible 1:00:05]
14 supporting the males jail plan.

15 It is not progressive to disenfranchise
16 communities throughout the city and divert resources
17 away from our school children and our seniors from
18 the homeless and the addicted and the mentally ill in
19 need of treatment to keep them from ending up in jail
20 place.

21 Borough based advocates constantly invoke the
22 mantra of the moral imperative closing Rikers, which
23 they then falsely equate with building big
24 skyscrapers jails.

2 Is it not a great moral imperative to invest in
3 New York City communities by giving residents the
4 educational housing and other resources that they
5 need to become productive members of societies.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: If you can wrap up your
7 comments, that would be appreciated.

8 IDA VERNON: Yes, thank you. This is not
9 justice; this is jail gate and I ask the Council to
10 please vote against it. Thank you.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you. Do this folks,
12 do this. I do this when I agree with somebody.
13 Everyone can do this.

14 CHARLOTTE PICOT: My name is Charlotte Picot and
15 I am on the Board of a seven-building apartment
16 complex, two blocks from the proposed jail in Queens.

17 Something is going on here and it's not criminal
18 justice reform. The Mayor and his team have
19 conflated closing Rikers with approval of this plan
20 as if one cannot be accomplished without the other.
21 The planning commission and most Council Member have
22 bought into this misguided ideology and decided that
23 this purported higher purpose gives them the right to
24 dismiss the no votes of five community boards and
25 borough presidents and betray their own constituents.

2 If this happens, it is the epidemy of a system gone
3 awry.

4 The City Council was not set up to act in a
5 vacuum independently of the citizens they were
6 elected to represent. The residents of all the
7 effected communities feel abandoned because the
8 Council Members of the four impacted districts have
9 inexplicably aligned themselves with the Mayor. They
10 know that the Council traditionally defers to the
11 wishes of the member in the effected district, but
12 this is the first time in New York City history that
13 a design build ULURP for all boroughs is subject to a
14 single vote. This massive project impacts far too
15 many people for you honorable Council Members to
16 forfeit your sound judgement and independent vote.

17 There are better, faster and cheaper ways to
18 close Rikers without building Yankee Stadium size
19 structures in residential communities. We have 14
20 existing jails that can be renovated in one year
21 versus eight at a fraction of the cost. If the
22 incarcerated numbers are going down, why build these
23 massive jails? The detainees will not benefit from
24 experimental towers with little outdoor recreation.

2 In Queens, most detainees will not be closer to
3 relatives and still have to be transported to
4 different courts. Remember your charge to represent
5 the people who elected you. We urge you to vote
6 against this ill-conceived project.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you very much, thank
8 you and folks, I just want to let you all know the
9 Sergeant at Arms just told me there is 187 people
10 that are signed up to testify. So, if we can please
11 keep an eye on the clock and wrap up your testimony
12 exactly when the clock hits zero, that is going to
13 be, that's the courteous thing to do to everyone else
14 that is in the room. I will be here all day no
15 matter what, but I want to make sure that everybody
16 has an opportunity to testify. 198 people have
17 signed up to testify, I want to be respectful of
18 everybody that is here in the room. Thank you.
19 Assembly member, thank you.

20 ULENE NEW: Hello, sorry, I represent a lot of
21 people, so I am sorry, I am going to try and talk
22 like the micromachine man. I represent the 65th
23 District. It includes the current tenant site for
24 the Manhattan Detention Center, and I am sorry -

2 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: We will hold the clock for
3 you. Folks, I know that tensions are running high,
4 but this has to be an orderly hearing, we cannot have
5 disruptions throughout the hearing or else we are
6 disenfranchising our neighbors.

7 Today is the Council hearing on this topic and we
8 are here all together to discuss this issue. There
9 is a variety of opinions. I know that tensions are
10 running high and there is a lot of very strong
11 passionate opinions on this. If we can be respectful
12 to one another, that will go a long way towards
13 making sure that every voice is heard. Thank you.

14 ULENE NEW: Okay, so apologies. So, I just want
15 to note that the horrific deaths of Kalief Browder
16 and Layleen Polanco exemplify the disturbing
17 treatment of pretrial detainees and blatant failure
18 in maintaining our criminal justice system.

19 Rikers Island is unequivocally an inhumane and
20 decaying institution that must be shut down. But we
21 believe that this can be achieved in a different
22 manner than the current process.

23 During the initial Rikers Island closure task
24 force meetings, the Mayor's Administration planned to
25 expand and refit 125 White Street, the current

2 detention complex in our community to rebuild it into
3 the Manhattan Borough Based Detention Center. Based
4 on the 125 White Street site, we had a lot of
5 different meetings with stakeholders, elected
6 officials and community boards but that site was then
7 changed and then changed again and many community
8 members fought against the different site changes and
9 stated that this location – the former location that
10 they had would not work as a site for the project.

11 The Mayor and the City then responded by
12 beginning the ULURP process and producing draft scope
13 of work documents for 80 Center. The city then
14 claimed that the 80 Center Street location could not
15 be the site for the plan, siting unexpected costs and
16 complications.

17 With the different changes, we believe that you
18 know, this is not standard protocol. Other
19 applications would not have been permitted to proceed
20 with significant changes such as a site change and
21 that's why believe that there should be different
22 ULURP processes.

23 There is no doubt that New York needs real
24 criminal justice reform. Recognizing that need, I
25 worked with my colleagues and the State legislature

3 to create comprehensive reforms to our criminal
4 justice system.

5 This year, our legislature eliminated cash bail
6 for most misdemeanors, ensured the right to a speedy
7 trial and passed additional criminal justice reform
8 legislation that is crucial to reducing our detainee
9 population and creating a fair justice system for
10 all.

11 We believe that adding more beds in jails does
12 not benefit our community. It only works to give
13 privatized jails more money. Benefiting private jail
14 owners should never be the priority over the needs
15 and well being of New Yorkers.

16 We urge the Council to vote in opposition to
17 these plans, as we have already noted. This process
18 was flawed from the start and we must restart to work
19 on a holistic approach that places true community
20 engagement as a priority and provides humane and
21 effective reforms to our criminal justice.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you Assembly Member,
23 thank you.

24 ULENE NEW: Thank you.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay, thank you very much
to this panel. Next panel in favor is Colvin Grannum

2 from Rikers Independent Commission, Dyjuan Tatro from
3 Fortune Society, Robert Fisk Jr. from the Lippman
4 Commission and Vidal Guzman from Just Leadership
5 Close Rikers.

6 Oh, and, we've been joined also by Manhattan
7 Borough President Gale Brewer. Come on down.

8 GALE BREWER: Thank you very much Chair Levin and
9 all of the members of the Committee. I want to say
10 that as the Borough President of Manhattan, we had a
11 year before discussion at Task Force. We worked with
12 the NAC and now we are combining all of the
13 stakeholders and on July 10th, we had a fabulous very
14 robust and extremely articulate group of people
15 testify on this topic.

16 So, we're taking it very seriously and I do
17 support a borough-based jail system. It's an
18 important step. Although, not the only step in
19 moving toward a fairer justice system.

20 So, I am going to talk about two issues because I
21 am very conscious of time. One of course, is that
22 the city is asking for 30 percent more floor area
23 ratio than what is allowed under current zoning. And
24 they have provided, with all do respect and I watched
25 every minute of your earlier hearing on television.

2 They have provided no justification or explanation
3 for this FAR. And you look at other jails in other
4 places like San Diego, the Manhattan facility is
5 twice the size. So far today, right now, there is no
6 proposed design, no rationale for why such a large
7 building is needed and I think that's unfair to the
8 community.

9 Number two, you heard very articulate information
10 from Council Member Chin about Chung Pak Complex.
11 It's adjacent to the proposed development. It has
12 businesses, daycare and of course a lot of seniors.
13 And what we want from the City in terms of this
14 building, Chung Pak should be given the opportunity
15 to purchase the land beneath the complex for well
16 below market rate. We are good deed restriction to
17 guarantee permanent use of a nonprofit.

18 Number two, we know about the businesses and the
19 employees that will be displaced. We have to make
20 sure that the businesses have a place to go and that
21 they come back at a good rent.

22 And third, it should be protected during
23 demolition, that goes without saying. All the way to
24 protect seniors right next door to the building.

2 I want to just mention in conclusion, because I
3 am very conscious of time, contextual humane, small
4 businesses, Chung Pak, Borough based jails. Thank
5 you very much.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you Borough
7 President.

8 ROBERT FISKE: My name is Robert Fiske. I am a
9 Senior Counsel at the law firm of Davis Polk and
10 Wardwell and a former United States attorney for the
11 Southern District of New York. I am a member of the
12 Lippman Commission and I am here to urge the City
13 Council to support the City's plan to close the
14 Rikers jail complex to reduce the number of people
15 who are incarcerated in our city and to hold those
16 people who are incarcerated in a much smaller system
17 or borough facilities.

18 From the prospective of public safety, criminal
19 justice and morality, this plan is the right
20 approach. We must take advantage of it and take
21 advantage of it now.

22 The eight active jails on Rikers Island are in
23 bad physical condition and these conditions and their
24 isolation have produced what so many agree is a
25

2 culture of violence. In many respects, Rikers Island
3 leaves people much worse off than when they enter.

4 We can and must do better starting with efforts
5 to incarcerate many fewer people. There is much
6 farther to go but the progress that has been made
7 over the past few years is encouraging as thousands
8 and fewer people are in jail on any given day. This
9 progress should continue as bail and discovery
10 reforms take place in January. There are two
11 extremely important benefits that make approval of
12 this plan so important.

13 First, for the smaller number of people who are
14 incarcerated, better designed jails with better
15 visitation areas improved sightlines, smaller units
16 in designated treatment and programming space provide
17 an opportunity to break with the terrible legacy of
18 Rikers.

19 Second, the proposed facilities are closer to
20 courthouses, eliminating terrible logistic
21 difficulties involving transporting people to and
22 from court and facilitating visits from family
23 members where there isn't other service providers.

24

25

2 I urge you to act on this plan. The city has
3 started out well and I second Judge Lippman in saying
4 we must do it now.

5 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you.

6 DYJUAN TATRO: Good afternoon and first and
7 foremost I would just like to thank the Council for
8 having us all today. I would like to also thank all
9 the members who support this plan, in particularly
10 thank Diana Ayala for her courage and foresight in
11 this plan moving forward. My name is Dyjuan Tatro.

12 I am a Government Affairs Officer at the Bard Prison
13 Initiative and I am speaking today in my capacity as
14 a Board Member at the Fortune Society.

15 At the Fortune Society, we work with formerly
16 incarcerated and informally incarcerated people, both
17 on and off Rikers Island and I can say that all of
18 the people that we work with who have spent any time
19 on Rikers Island has described that as the worst
20 experience they have ever had. There is a lot of
21 talk here today about buildings. This is not about
22 buildings; this is about people and we need to move
23 these jails back into the communities to change
24 people's relationships to these jails.

3 It is convenient, it is convenient for these
4 cities and those communities who do not want these
5 facilities moved into their communities to have
6 people in a penal colony on Rikers Island. Where
7 they don't have to think about what is happening
8 there. Where they do not have to see what is
9 happening there. People need to wake up and see
10 jails every day. And not only jails, but they need
11 to experience the family members that go in and out
12 of them every day. They need to recognize the
13 humanity that is enclosed in them spaces.

14 And while I agree that jails are not the best
15 place to address the social inequities and social
16 injustices in this society, I do disagree that a jail
17 is a jail. Just like Attica is the worst prison in
18 this state, Rikers Island is the worst jail in this
19 state and probably the country. It is a bad place.
20 I've spent twelve years in prison, and I know from
21 everyone I have every come in contact with that
22 Rikers Island has traumatized them for the rest of
23 their life.

24 We need to close Rikers and close it now.

25 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you.

2 COLVIN GRANNUM: Good afternoon. My name is
3 Colvin Grannum, I am a member of the Lippman
4 Commission. I also am President and Chief Executive
5 Officer of Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation
6 in Brooklyn New York.

7 I prepared written testimony which I will leave
8 for you to read. I will tell you that Bedford
9 Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation is the nations
10 first community development corporation. Our
11 strategic direction is to close the racial, wealth
12 gap and we have been looking at this issue from that
13 perspective. Locating detention centers or jails as
14 close as possible to courts is a step toward a more
15 just criminal justice system. A step toward
16 reforming a system that contributes to the growing
17 racial wealth gap and a step to advance a more
18 equitable local economy. The racial wealth gap, as
19 you might know, has to do with the median income of
20 Whites compared to Black's and Latino's and other
21 minorities.

22 The median income for White's is thirteen times
23 the median income for Black's and about eight times
24 the median income from Latino families or Latinx.

25 Locating the jails as close to the courts as possible

2 will limit the economic havoc that jails have on the
3 people who are confined, many of whom are innocent
4 and their families.

5 We serve people who have been in Rikers and other
6 detention facilities in prisons and what we know is
7 that incarceration reeks, as I said before, economic
8 havoc. It harms economic stability. It crushes
9 credit scores, it often times throws families into
10 housing instability. It damages economic attainment
11 and educational attainment and what we need to do is
12 look at all of these policies that we have,
13 especially this particular one from the impact it has
14 on having minority families join economic mainstream
15 and generate some economic upward mobility for their
16 families and themselves.

17 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you. Thanks very much.

18 VIDAL GUZMAN: My name is Vidal Guzman. I am
19 from Harlem. I am the community organizer with Just
20 Leadership USA, the Close Rikers Island Campaign. I
21 have been a part of this campaign for the past three
22 and a half years.

23 The close Rikers Campaign plan forced the city to
24 response. Today, you have the honor of listening to
25

3 fellow campaign leaders who have been directly
4 impacted and harmed by Rikers.

5 One thing I am going to say right now, everyone
6 put your fist up if you have been incarcerated on
7 Rikers Island right now. You see the difference
8 between people who actually have been on Rikers and
9 the difference between people talking about what we
10 need. You cannot say anything without us. There is
11 no plan without us.

12 Today, you have the honor of listening to us. We
13 are now taking action to ensure our needs and demand
14 are met. I am so proud as this moment we have built.
15 No other effort has come this close to closing
16 Rikers. We now urge the City Council to support and
17 improve the land use proposed, so the city can move
18 forward with the construction of four borough-based
19 facilities in order to close Rikers. Twelve to four
20 jails directly impacted and prove that. We have
21 **[inaudible 1:27:18]** this year that will help
22 decarcerate and we will keep pushing the city and the
23 state further. But we did the math and the jail
24 population would not get low enough in the next few
25 years for the city to close Rikers without building.
And we're not leaving no one behind.

2 I was incarcerated in a different town for a
3 total of seven years and between the age of 126 and
4 24. The most important thing about being
5 incarcerated is improved condition. I survived two
6 years of solitary confinement and I right next to
7 Chinatown. I once had to climb the wall to try and
8 look at the window. What is humanizing about that?
9 Let's get the glimpse of people saying that we should
10 just put them in a borough-based facility without
11 improving conditions. That's never going to run
12 through us. This campaign has changed the hearts of
13 the cities to make sure that the criminal justice
14 system, that we are now at the table. And we will
15 not leave the table until we close down Rikers and
16 build community and there is no plan without us.

17 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you, thanks very much.
18 Thank you, panel. Next panel is Paul Yan, Joseph
19 Mirabella, Somali King and MJ Williams.

20 Panel, I need you to step up very quickly, nearly
21 200 folks are waiting. Is there just one person that
22 I called for this panel? If so, if this is the only
23 person, what is your name?

24 Okay, I am going to call Maureen Silverman,
25 Katlyn Moss, Patricia Ty, Calamity Alexis.

2 You may begin, please state your name for the
3 record.

4 MJ WILLIAMS: Good afternoon, my name is MJ
5 Williams. I am an attorney and a member of No New
6 Jails NYC. I am also disgusted, and I am done being
7 respectful. I am disgusted that City Council has the
8 gall to have a land use subcommittee hold the only
9 public hearing about refortifying, reinvesting and
10 caging New Yorkers in death and torture chambers.

11 I am disgusted to hear you say the Mayor's plan
12 has anything to do with closing Rikers, when you know
13 it kicks the can down to 2026 or 2027. When none of
14 you will be in office and it does so without a single
15 mechanism or binding guarantee that the Rikers jails
16 will actually close.

17 I am disgusted that we here receive just 120
18 seconds when you, MOCJ, DOC, Lippman Commission took
19 years to come up with the dystopian notion that you'd
20 solve the horror of New York City jails on Rikers
21 with more New York City jails. And when Council
22 Members hear the sensible ways to shut down the
23 Rikers jails without building more jails, they say
24 that isn't realistic or practical and their fellow
25 travelers say, we just aren't there yet.

2 I only have a few seconds left, so let me just
3 say that that is coated language for your laziness,
4 your complacency, your weakness. And please, if you
5 would take a look at me while I am speaking, I would
6 appreciate that. For your lack of courage to risk
7 change, to risk crossing the NYPD, police and jail
8 guard unions. For choosing comfort and safety in
9 your job over the life of people like Layleen Polanco
10 and Kalief Browder.

11 You know, I'd like to use profanity here to
12 express my disgust, but I don't want you to clutch
13 your pearls and miss what I am saying. You have
14 shoved this decision about jailing New Yorkers into a
15 sanitized land use decision about building height,
16 shadows and traffic.

17 But if this Subcommittee votes yes and your
18 fellow Council Members then pass this plan, you will
19 have blood on your hands and Chair Adams, it would be
20 great if you could listen to me. That decision will
21 haunt you the rest of your tidy meaningless careers.
22 Vote no. Do your job, risk your job. Vote no do
23 your job or risk you job if that what it takes to
24 close Rikers without building more jails. Thank you.

2 [UNIDENTIFIED]: Hi, I feel like a lot of people
3 are saying -

4 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Could you please state your
5 name.

6 CALAMITY ALEXIS: My name is Calamity Alexis.

7 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you.

8 CALAMITY ALEXIS: People are saying that the plan
9 is either keep Rikers open and we don't build these
10 jails or build these jails and close Rikers and I
11 think that's false. We have the ability to close
12 Rikers without building fucking jails. We don't need
13 to spend \$11 billion on incarcerating people and we
14 should be spending money on actual communities,
15 preventing people from going to jail in the first
16 place.

17 If we have too many people in jail, people
18 committing petty crimes should not be in jail. So,
19 if we don't have enough space in fucking jails than
20 we need to change the laws, so that people aren't in
21 jail for things that they should not be in jail for.
22 It's not about I don't want people incarcerated near
23 me, it's about, I don't want people incarcerated
24 period. And this plan is not about making a more
25 humane jail, I am not sure how you can have a humane

2 jail because you are still putting people in a cage.

3 But this plan is not about the families of

4 incarcerated people. This plan is not about

5 communities. It's just about making sure that we can

6 continue to incarcerate people in this city, and I am

7 not fooled, and No New Jails is not fooled by this

8 plan and there are lots of people in this room and in

9 this city that are not fooled by this plan. And this

10 is not real community involvement. If you really

11 want community involvement, you would have more

12 public hearings and you would have borough based

13 public hearings.

14 This is not about communities and it's not about

15 incarcerated people, it's just about putting people

16 in jail. And if you really cared about incarcerated

17 people, we would close Rikers immediately and not

18 build new jails. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you.

20 PATRICIA TY: My name is Patricia Ty and I am

21 here to represent the Lin Sing Association. Founded

22 in 1900, the Lin Sing Association is one of the

23 oldest traditional associations in Chinatown. The

24 Association has thousands of members and is comprised

25 of 18 separate organizations, each of which has at

2 least 80 years of history. Our spend thrift Mayor is
3 in a great hurry to commit \$10 billion of public
4 funds to build four skyscraper jails in the city. He
5 says this is a moral imperative because the inhumane
6 conditions on Rikers must end immediately. The
7 conditions on Rikers do need to end immediately but
8 are new jails really the moral imperative here?

9 At every hearing, City officials regurgitate that
10 being on Rikers makes family visits difficult. But
11 the NYC ferry route to Soundview opened on August 15,
12 2018, which bypasses Rikers Island. Is less than a
13 10-minute ferry ride from 90th Street and the East
14 river and less than a five-minute ferry ride from
15 Soundview in the Bronx. Extending the NYC ferry
16 Soundview route to Rikers Island would transform
17 transportation access there.

18 Ferry boats could make direct connections to
19 existing docks in the Bronx and Manhattan and
20 transfers could be made from Queens and Brooklyn.
21 Clearly, change of location is not necessary, rather
22 than spending billions of dollars on construction
23 projects that will only replicate the same broken
24 system in four new sites across the city, why has the
25 city never considered a complete demolition of every

2 structure on Rikers Island and then replace them with
3 a complex brand new human center facilities that are
4 designed to address the current prison crisis from
5 the ground up to begin with. Being on Rikers would
6 allow the new structures to be low and arrange
7 horizontally. This would offer a far safer
8 environment to all in case of fire, natural disaster
9 and other emergencies. Contrast that to the Mayor's
10 proposed vertical jail towers. Can anyone imagine
11 having to evacuate 1,500 detainees with
12 nonfunctioning elevators when a fire or other
13 catastrophic event strikes in densely populated
14 Chinatown or downtown Brooklyn.

15 Who will be responsible for the lives of those
16 trapped in the building? How does exposing detainees
17 to this clear and present danger restore their
18 humanity?

19 MAUREEN SILVERMAN: My name is Maureen Silverman.
20 I am here today to testify as a resident of over 25
21 years in Tribeca. I live in the district of the
22 Manhattan Detention Center that is proposed to be
23 expanded. I am a constituent of Margaret Chin. I am
24 also testifying today on behalf of the deadly
25 exchange campaign of Jewish Voice for Peace.

3 Margaret Chin, I would like to first let you know
4 that mitigation measures are not enough. You need to
5 call for no new jails. You need to oppose the plan,
6 just like every other Council Member needs to because
7 jails are inherently toxic and violent. They always
8 have been, and they always will be.

9 In your very own district Margaret Chin, the
10 tombs were renovated over and over again and they are
11 violent and corrupt to this day, just like the
12 federal MCC has been in the paper for their
13 continuous violence and the Brooklyn Detention
14 Centers. All jails are violent, and we don't want to
15 reproduce more Rikers in the boroughs. We need to if
16 anything dismantle the jails that exist.

17 So, Margaret Chin and all Council Members, vote
18 no. No new jails, no expanded jails in Manhattan,
19 the Bronx, the Brooklyn and Kew Gardens. It's not
20 about not in my backyard, no new and expanded jails
21 anywhere.

22 And the deadly exchange campaign of Jewish Voice
23 for Peace adamantly opposes the borough-based jails
24 plan and we say from New York City to Palestine, no
25 more jails. No more cages. And people should know,
people should know that Jewish Voice for Peace is the

2 fastest growing Jewish organization in the country
3 and our Deadly Exchange Campaign says no to the
4 borough-based jails plan.

5 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you very much.

6 MAUREEN SILVERMAN: The campaign –

7 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you very much panel.

8 Thank you for your passion. Thank you for your time,
9 thank you for your honesty. Thank you. We are going
10 to call the next panel. Rabbi Rachel, Peter Samuels,
11 Kandra Clark, and Dr. Daniel Selling.

12 Rabbi Rachel, Peter Samuels, Kendra Clark, Dr.
13 Daniel Selling.

14 RABBI RACHEL: Hi, my name is Rabbi Rachel
15 Timoner. I am the Senior Rabbi of Congregation Beth
16 Elohim in Park Slope Brooklyn. Our congregation has
17 been working for several years on criminal justice
18 reform with a special concern on dismantling racism.

19 And in that work, we've worked on Raise the Age,
20 we worked on bail reform. We work with District
21 Attorney Eric Gonzales on trying to dismantle racism
22 in the criminal justice system. Again, and again and
23 again and again, stories come back about Rikers
24 Island and the dehumanizing and brutalizing effect it
25 has on the people who are sent there.

2 And I am here to say that we need to close Rikers
3 and this is a once in a generation opportunity for us
4 and it's essential that we do this.

5 We know in the book of Genesis that all human
6 beings are created in the image of God. Everyone,
7 regardless of whatever zip code they were born in.
8 Regardless of how much money they have. Regardless
9 of what color their skin is. There is no exceptions.
10 Every human being is created in the image of God.
11 And so, we must not collectively create systems that
12 dehumanize people, that brutalize people, that make
13 people forgotten or feel forgotten.

14 This is the period for the Jewish people. This
15 month is called Elul and it's the period right before
16 Rosh Hashanah when we focus on repentance and we
17 think about the ways we've sinned. And we don't just
18 think about our own individual sins, we think about
19 our collective sins, because we are all held
20 accountable for the sins of our community.

21 Rikers Island is a sin. It is a sin. It is
22 destroying lives. It is throwing away human lives
23 and that is a sin. And so, I am here to say as a
24 Rabbi, we need to repent for this, and we need to end
25 this sin. Thank you.

2 PETER SAMUELS: My name is Peter Samuels and I am
3 here today to speak in support of the plan to close
4 Rikers Island. I am in the Boards of Fedcap group in
5 Argus Community. Organizations that provide social
6 services to underserved communities in New York City.
7 I am also a member of the Rikers Commission.

8 It did not take our Commission long to conclude
9 that Rikers jails are irredeemable and that Rikers is
10 emblematic of much deeper issues in our city and it's
11 criminal justice system. Far too many people
12 incarcerated, almost 90 percent of whom are people of
13 color and most people who are incarcerated have a
14 mental health diagnosis or a substance use problem.

15 New York City can and must hold far fewer people
16 in jail. The push to close Rikers from the
17 Administration and the City Council have already
18 accelerated a process of decarceration that has
19 resulted in 2,500 fewer people in jail over the past
20 two and a half years. While crime continues to drop,
21 this door close. The four borough facilities under
22 consideration now are a necessary path to put an end
23 to Rikers. Safer facilities, closer to courthouses
24 and family members, equipped with proper space for
25 medical care, and reentry programs who will

2 facilitate more opportunities for success. That is
3 the right and humane thing to do and will ultimately
4 improve public safety.

5 Our commission projected their drastically
6 smaller system detention, would save our city over \$1
7 ½ billion a year, far exceeding the cost of building
8 borough facilities, enabling long term investments in
9 other areas.

10 Every day Rikers Island is still open is a day
11 New Yorkers are being harmed. If we New Yorkers fail
12 to act now, fail to seize this moment, the very real
13 risk is that we will lose the chance to close Rikers
14 Island for many years, maybe forever. Please vote in
15 support of this plan to close these jails as fast as
16 possible. Thank you.

17 KANDRA CLARK: My name is Kendra Clark. I am the
18 Associate Vice President with Exodus Transitional
19 Community, a preventative reentry and advocacy
20 organization located in East Harlem.

21 Our founder and 90 percent of our staff are
22 directly impacted and like almost all of our
23 participants, we have been detained or incarcerated
24 on Rikers in the past.

2 In addition, I am a leader on both the Close
3 Rikers and Beyond Rosie's Campaigns. Most
4 importantly, I am directly impacted woman who
5 experienced first hands of the horrors of the Rose M.
6 Singer Center for a period of four months.

7 You have all heard me testify throughout the
8 ULURP process around the abuse, harassment and
9 inhumane conditions on Rikers including the
10 deteriorating buildings that lack adequate space for
11 programming and are isolated from family, counsel and
12 community.

13 Today, I want to discuss the reasons why you
14 should vote yes with conditions to the Mayor's plan,
15 with the conditions being repeatedly outlined by
16 directly impacted advocates. Most importantly, the
17 Close Rikers Plan, our plan, calls for 3,000 people
18 or less in the new facilities with realistic
19 strategies to continue to decarcerate while we create
20 transformative healing and justice practices that
21 will allow us to reach our goal of abolition while
22 keeping our communities and families safe at the same
23 time.

24 Our build communities platform outlines the
25 community and preventive investments needed to end

2 mass incarceration and in New York State and beyond.

3 Funding for Cure Violence interrupters, credible

4 messengers, medical mobile units in leu of NYPD

5 command centers, diversion centers where people

6 retain all of their civil rights, youth centers,

7 employment training and education programs etc., will

8 ensure our communities have access to the resources

9 they need to be successful.

10 The money saved through the closure of Rikers can

11 be used to invest in these resources and much more.

12 In addition, the Island can be used as a renewable

13 energy source for the entire city creating better

14 health outcomes for all New Yorkers through the

15 renewable Rikers Act, which we strongly support and

16 hope you do as well.

17 Furthermore, with respect to the design and

18 culture of the new facilities, we must not sacrifice

19 space for programming in humane conditions for people

20 by reducing the height of building to accommodate

21 nimbyism.

22 Reducing the height of building should come from

23 continued decarceration efforts and investments for

24 alternatives and the rest, thank you, you can read.

2 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you very much. Thank
3 you, panel. The next panel is Brandon Holmes, Sharon
4 White-Harrigan, Darren Mack, Minister Dr. Victoria
5 Phillips and Reverend David F. Telfort.

6 This panel is Brandon Holmes, Sharon White-
7 Harrigan, Darren Mack, Minister Dr. Victoria
8 Phillips, and Reverend David F. Telfort.

9 Please remember to state your name before you
10 speak. You may begin when you are ready.

11 BRANDON HOLMES: Brandon Holmes. The Close
12 Rikers Campaign calls on City Council to amend the
13 current ULURP application to reflect our plan.
14 Providing a clear path for the city to reduce
15 capacity to incarcerate people by over 75 percent.
16 The Close Rikers Campaign advocates for City Council
17 to center three priorities in this upcoming vote.

18 One, reducing our capacity to incarcerate New
19 Yorkers from 15,000 beds to 3,000 or below from our
20 current twelve facilities down to four.

21 Two, improving conditions for New Yorkers who are
22 currently incarcerated, including folks who have been
23 remanded and do not have the option of bail.

24 Three, reducing our over reliance on the punitive
25 legal system making it possible to divest from law

2 enforcement agencies and invest in the communities
3 most harmed by mass incarceration. We will be
4 submitting our build communities platform which
5 contains over 100 concrete policy and budget demands
6 that would support community-based solutions which
7 can lead New York City to achieving a zero average
8 daily population.

9 We know that a combined ULURP and design build
10 are the right choice to be able to close Rikers on
11 the fastest timeline possible and ensure that not one
12 person is left behind on torture Island. This joint
13 ULURP reinforces that we have a major commitment
14 across this city to closing Rikers, improving
15 conditions and increasing access to family courts and
16 legal supports which would improve case outcomes and
17 reduce lengths of stay in New York City jails.

18 The community has been engaged since the
19 beginning of this plan because this plan came from
20 the community. Specifically, from survivors of
21 Rikers Island.

22 As early as 2016, our campaign was mobilizing
23 directly impacting formerly incarcerated residents of
24 every single borough during the original Lippman
25 Commission hearings to share their experiences of how

2 Rikers Island had impacted their lives and
3 communities.

4 Our members met with city officials in each
5 borough to identify areas for improvement and outline
6 our specific priorities in improving this plan to
7 implement the full closure of Rikers Island. While
8 elements of exactly which programs, what design and
9 even what management structure are still being
10 debated and negotiated. We know without a doubt that
11 if this plan is defeated or delayed it will mean
12 people will spend more time on Rikers Island with no
13 plan or commitment to closure.

14 We need to do these two streams of planning
15 concurrently just as we divest from incarceration by
16 shrinking jails and improving conditions, we can
17 improve access to programs and supports for people in
18 our communities. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you. Next speaker.

20 DARREN MACK: My name is Darren Mack. At the age
21 of 17, I was arrested for being an accomplice to a
22 robbery, charged as an adult, and incarcerated on
23 Rikers Island for 19 months.

24 At that time, there were over 20,000 people
25 detained on Rikers. After serving 20 years from a

2 20-40-year sentence in prison, I returned home to the
3 city that I love and found that the culture of
4 violence and human rights violations on Rikers still
5 remain. That is why I got involved with the Close
6 Rikers Campaign.

7 While New York City had the capacity to
8 incarcerate 15,000 people, thanks to years of
9 activism, advocacy and organizing, those beds are not
10 filled.

11 We must keep going. This is challenging and
12 complex. This is not about one community over
13 another or four communities. This is about our
14 entire city.

15 In June of 2017, I approached New York City Mayor
16 Bill de Blasio in his gym to hand him a copy of a
17 limit commission report with highlights of the
18 commission's recommendations that would either
19 totally be absent or barely mentioned in his plan.

20 The Mayor proposed a system that is fairer, 89
21 percent of people in Rikers are Black and Latino and
22 they come from neighborhoods like Brownsville, East
23 Harlem, and the South Bronx, which have been
24 historically under resourced; that's not fair.

25 300,000 incarcerated persons on Rikers for a year

2 while community centers and communities of color and
3 public libraries have closed due to lack of funding
4 from the city. That's not fair.

5 Crime in our city is at historic lows but the
6 NYPD budget is at historic highs. Over \$5 billion a
7 year and our schools have more cops than counselors.
8 That's not fair. Investments are choices and those
9 choices for too long have created a tale of two
10 cities.

11 The Close Rikers Campaign Plan is to shrink the
12 system for 12 jails across the city to four borough-
13 based facilities. Decarcerate for 15,000 capacity to
14 3,000 and put for historic justice reinvestments to
15 build communities.

16 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you.

17 DARREN MACK: Build communities in this ULURP
18 process.

19 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you so much.

20 REVEREND SHARON WHITE HARRIGAN: Good afternoon,
21 my name is Reverend Sharon White Harrigan. I am a
22 member of the Beyond Rosie's 2020 Campaign Movement
23 and I am also a woman with lived experience and after
24 spending over a decade in a maximum facility for
25 women in Bedford Hills, I had the misfortune of going

2 through Rose M. Singer Center. And upon my arrival,
3 I was appalled at the lack of professionalism,
4 decaying building, lack of programs, lack of
5 resources and lack of respect towards women with the
6 lack of oversight and accountability.

7 There is a culture that breeds violence, distain,
8 mistreatment and misguidance within that Island. My
9 experience has not been healthy or rehabilitative.
10 The trauma I experienced beforehand exacerbated.
11 There weren't any therapeutic services available
12 unless it entailed medication. I needed a venue to
13 grieve, not be medicated. I needed to process what
14 happened, not be propositioned by male CO's,
15 especially since I was there for an attempted rape.

16 The idea of detaining women didn't mistreat them.
17 It's far worse than the offense you claim they
18 committed. How is the city any better when women are
19 rapped, mistreated, used, disrespected, exploited and
20 devalued. No longer be the problem but be a part of
21 the solution and let's envision a world of justice
22 and safety of healing and restoration. Let's close
23 Rikers now.

24 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you, Reverend.
25

2 MINISTER DR. VICTORIA PHILLIPS: Good afternoon
3 Chair and all others. My name is Minister Dr.
4 Victoria A. Phillips, every one calls me Ms. V.

5 Previously, I did CBT on Rikers and have sat on
6 the DOC Advisory Board for the past five years. I
7 joined the jails action coalition in 2012 because
8 often people in position to make change, do not.

9 Often you all don't believe the formerly
10 incarcerated or the currently incarcerated
11 individuals truth and trauma.

12 Today, you will hear countless testimonies on
13 systematic torture, environmental hazards and
14 barbaric violations of human rights. Today, you will
15 hear invest in NYCHA. Well, I sit before you after
16 having brain surgery because of NYCHA and I am
17 letting you know, this is not a NYCHA conversation.
18 This is close Rikers today with conditions that has
19 directly impacted advocates and community leaders
20 have put together. This is an include in your legacy
21 constructing and implementing mental health diversion
22 centers to decrease the population anywhere from ¼ to
23 ½ type of conversation.

24 Today, you will hear the Mayor will not be in
25 office in 2026. True, but everyone of us will be

2 around. That means we can no longer sit around
3 placing blame on each other. We must all step up to
4 do the work.

5 I am realistic, courts aren't closing tomorrow
6 and with thousands on community supervision, who can
7 be remanded on any given day, we must not lead them
8 behind. Close Rikers and drown the foundation in
9 culture of torture. Many of you have said Kalief
10 Browder's name and lately even Layleen's. Well,
11 today, I hold you all accountable. I am here to say
12 what will hear from others is true. If you don't
13 believe them, read the last federal monitors report.
14 It came our April of this year. Do not fear this
15 journey. Embrace your piece in history, do what is
16 right and save a life. Ask yourself, Council Member
17 Chin, ask yourself, regardless of the noise or the
18 traffic or the height of a building, is that
19 equivalent to a humans life? And for the record, Dr.
20 Homer who was a former medical director for Rikers,
21 emailed his statement and I submitted it in person
22 today. Please make sure you read it.

23 REVEREND DAVID F. TELFORT: I am the Reverend
24 David F. Telfort. I am the pastor of the Lafayette
25 Avenue Presbyterian Church, part of a coalition of

3 churches that have been part of the work happening
4 here today.

5 My calling as a clergy person is to walk through
6 life with people during their most trying and joyous
7 times and that means committing my time and energy to
8 creating a world that allows for their flourishing
9 and that is what brings me here today.

10 I believe that no one should be held in prisons
11 and jails. Our over incarceration in this country
12 does not heal, it does not make us safer, but further
13 breaks down our society. And so, today, I've been a
14 witness to the call to shut Rikers Island down. I
15 come to bear witness to a transformative vision to
16 create smaller, restorative community-based spaces
17 where true healing can take place. Spaces where
18 returning citizens can be reunited with their loved
19 ones and communities.

20 As a pastor, I have been witness to the ways in
21 which the violence of Rikers traumatizes Black and
22 Brown women, children, and men in particular. Rikers
23 is a sin that we must repent from because people in
24 cages cannot be brought to restoration.

25 As important is asking ourselves the question,
how did we get here? As a Council, your

2 conversations should consider interrogating White
3 supremacist, policing practices and holistic support
4 to communities, so that education, healthcare, food
5 and security and mental health needs are met. Vote
6 yes with decarceration as your goal.

7 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you very much very
8 passionate panel. Thank you so much.

9 The next panel is Ranae Levine, Phillip DePaulo,
10 Ms. Rot Ziba[SP?], Kay Williams, Sandy Balbosa[SP?].

11 I will call the names again, Ranae Levine, Philip
12 DePaulo, Ms. Rot Ziba, Ky Williams and Sandy Balbosa.

13 Remember to state your name for the record and do
14 remember to turn the microphone on before you begin.
15 You may begin.

16 RANAЕ LEVINE: My name is Ranae Levine and I am
17 from Kew Gardens. I want to thank you for the time
18 that I can tell you about – summarize a year of
19 frustration and lies and to inform everyone how this
20 project plan or at the moment concept, whatever you
21 want to call it, has evolved.

22 This concept is basically about politics and
23 developers. It's more about that than judicial
24 reform.

2 The Mayor, wherever he may be at this particular
3 moment and time, and his commissioners, dominions and
4 public relations people had already spent \$8 million
5 on a public relations firm before we ever heard of
6 what was happening.

7 There plan, concept, to build a 30-story jail in
8 our small residential historic community and I've
9 mentioned the word community, which has been banded
10 about by the Department of Corrections and in
11 contrast to the Lippman report.

12 There was no effort, as has been mentioned
13 before, to talk to any of us who are the civic
14 leaders of our area.

15 Thirdly, the DEIS report was either sloppy or
16 intentionally misleading. Not having a financial
17 ability that the Mayor has, we had to rely on our
18 neighbors and friends to respond to the floors and
19 outright ridiculous suggestions. Such as putting a
20 crossing guard on our most congested thoroughfare
21 that would solve the traffic problem.

22 We are a small middle class residential,
23 multiethnic, multiracial community, longtime
24 residents. This plan or concept will have a totally
25 negative effect on our community and our lives and

2 no, Mr. Mayor, we will not get used to this as you
3 have asked us to do. We will not, we remember, and
4 we vote. Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thanks very much.

6 MS. ROT ZIBA: Hello everyone, my name is Ms. Rot
7 Ziba. I am a member of DRUM, Desis Rising Up and
8 Moving.

9 We are a membership led organization of 4,500
10 South Asian and Indo Caribbean immigrants, workers
11 youth and adults in New York City.

12 I live in the Bronx, which is a majority low
13 income immigrants, people of color borough. So, it
14 is disturbing to me that our city is planning to
15 build four new jails in our communities with \$11
16 billion. My neighborhood, just like other places
17 throughout the city needs better schools, public
18 transportation, affordable housing, hospitals, mental
19 health services and jobs. Those are the things the
20 \$11 billion should go towards.

21 There is already enough money being spent on
22 jails, but these jails do not provide the real
23 transformative changes we need to succeed. Contrary
24 to authority figures beliefs, jails do not decrease
25 crimes but rather increase them because they bring in

3 more policing and criminal innocent community members
4 to fill the jails they built.

5 The \$11 billion needs to go to actually
6 preventing people from landing in prison in the first
7 place. Building a whole jail in the Bronx and in
8 other boroughs, would mean that innocent lives,
9 especially young people of color, would be
10 criminalized, sent to jail and lose the opportunity
11 to make positive changes in the community.

12 People in my community want to succeed. We want
13 to see our young people go to school, become leaders
14 and make change in the community. Many of the City
15 Council Members who are thinking of voting yes to
16 this terrible plan are in their last term in City
17 Council. But, your decision to build these four new
18 jails will have consequences, past your term ending.

19 This decision can't be undone. Each of you need
20 to ask yourselves, is criminalizing people of color,
21 young people, immigrants in our neighborhoods what
22 you want to be remembered for?

23 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you.

24 SANDY BALBOSA: Hi, good afternoon, I am Sandy
25 Balbosa representing the Atlantic Avenue Betterment
Association and Advocacy Group for Atlantic Avenue.

2 I have lived half a block from the Brooklyn
3 Detention Complex for 50 years. The plan to close
4 Rikers and build borough jails was conceived behind
5 closed doors. Today there are more questions than
6 answers. There are still no details about how this
7 experiment will work.

8 Mayor de Blasio has manipulated the public
9 process to bypass any real community input by lumping
10 the four boroughs together into this unprecedented
11 one size fits all land use application, the Mayor and
12 the Speaker have abated the ability of each
13 neighborhood to voice serious concerns. Each
14 community has a very different built environment and
15 different land use expectations and needs, and in
16 many cases, are in conflict with the selected site.

17 Furthermore, the MOCJ controlled the NAX and did
18 not provide a platform for our communities. In
19 response to the forward process and citywide outrage,
20 the four CB's voted against the city's plan to build
21 enormous, out of scale jails in their districts.

22 Borough President Adams has recommended a
23 significantly smaller facility with many fewer beds
24 for the Brooklyn site.

2 Councilman Levin has recently said of the
3 proposed Brooklyn jail, the scale doesn't make sense,
4 the facility that has been proposed is too big and he
5 also said, we should not build excessive capacity.

6 If this proposal is implemented, the Brooklyn and
7 Manhattan facilities will be the tallest jails in the
8 world. Instead, the city should build smaller jails
9 that reflect the criminal justice reforms past in
10 Albany and plan for 3,000 beds citywide. These new
11 reforms and other city policies will make the large-
12 scale jails unnecessary.

13 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you.

14 SANDY BALBOSA: Thank you.

15 PHILLIP DEPAULO: Good afternoon. My name is
16 Phillip DePaulo. I am a long-time activist in New
17 York, and I am a campaign manager for Victoria
18 Cambranes who is running for City Council in the 33rd
19 District, which covers the Brooklyn prison. She will
20 be speaking shortly. I really wasn't going to
21 testify today, but after the four hour of this panel
22 that sat here, I felt I had to say something because
23 I am even more confused about how the hell City
24 Planning even let this proposal come to you with such
25 incomplete information.

2 For four hours, they talked a lot and said
3 nothing. I mean, the Council Member from the Bronx,
4 he was asking about a barge that's been there for
5 years in his district and what was the timeline to
6 remove the barge and they didn't even have an answer.
7 They had answers for nothing. It was just like,
8 well, that's under consideration or we're not quite
9 sure yet.

10 I mean how are you as a Council supposed to vote
11 on a plan when there is no plan? And, I am just
12 really confused. Again, I see the lady that was here
13 from the panel is still sitting here and I am glad
14 you are still here, and I really wish this is
15 something that always pisses me off about these
16 hearings is that, you make the people sit for four
17 hours while these people talk. It should be the
18 other way around. The people should talk first and
19 then you get to listen to them and then let them
20 answer. Once you have heard these people, you've
21 heard people that have been in the prison system and
22 the abuse that they have went through. That's the
23 proper way in my opinion, to hold a hearing and I
24 really thank you for your time and I am really happy
25 that some of you are still actually here. Thank you.

2 KAY ADGADEE: Hello, hi, I am Kay Adgadee[SP?]
3 and I am speaking on behalf of Survived and Punished
4 New York Chapter.

5 First, I'd like to start with this quote. "We
6 submit that the basic evils of imprisonment are that
7 it denies autonomy, degrades dignity, impairs or
8 destroys self-reliance, minimizes the likelihood of
9 beneficial interaction with one's peers, fractures
10 family ties, destroys the families economic
11 stability, and prejudices the prisoner future
12 prospects for any improvement in their economic and
13 social status. It does all these things whether or
14 not the buildings are antiseptic or dirty. The aroma
15 of fresh bread or stale urine. The sleeping
16 accommodations, a plank or an innerspring mattress,
17 or the interaction of inmates takes place in cells or
18 corridors or in the structural setting of a
19 particular time and place."

20 This was written in a report authored in 1971.
21 We are still dealing with ineffective reliance on lip
22 service reforms in 2019. This is why survived, and
23 punished New York rises up along side our comrades in
24 no new jails and their demands to stop Mayor Bill de
25

2 Blasio's jail read, death and sexual violence
3 expansion into our communities.

4 We also want to emphasize our support for the
5 coalitions express demand of allocating the proposed
6 \$10 billion that would see jails built. Instead, we
7 put into Black and Brown communities. Our Comrade
8 ship with no new jails coalition is grounded in our
9 mutual belief in and practice of restorative and
10 transformative justice models of addressing harm.

11 Many of the women we visited at Bedford and other
12 prisons were also previously incarcerated at Rikers.
13 They know and we know new and expanded borough jails
14 will precipitate more survivors to be criminalized
15 and incarcerated.

16 As an abolitionist organization that focuses on
17 survivors, we advocate to free everyone from cages
18 and to do away with every aspect of the prison
19 industrial complex. We see this work as
20 intrinsically linked with the principle that no new
21 jails is outlined today.

22 The proposed building of new and expanded borough
23 jails empowers the state under the pretext of
24 decarceration, which directly contradicts our mutual
25

2 goals of prison abolition and it's destructive to our
3 city since all jails are inherently inhumane.

4 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you. Thank you, panel,
5 you are excused. Thank you so much, thank you.

6 Calling up the next panel. Oh, you may begin.

7 KEITH FRANCIS WILLIAMS: My name is Keith Francis
8 Williams. I am a co-founding member of the Black
9 Lives Matter Global movement. I am also the national
10 organizer for the Marsha P. Johnson Institute. I a
11 proud no new jails member.

12 This hearing today being the one and only
13 scheduled public hearing for our City Council
14 Members, I feel is completely disappointing and it is
15 a total misuse of your power, you time, and your
16 role. I think you are here to represent the people
17 and represent your constituents and I think that you
18 have only listened to certain constituents; most of
19 them who are tied to the city under a grant city
20 funding and or promise; and I know Corey Johnson is
21 not here. Where promised grants are being threatened
22 to take away money if they don't go along with this
23 plan.

24 See, when we first started this fight, we were
25 told, "don't even fight." From someone from the

2 Mayor's Office that I know is an organizer. This plan
3 is bought and paid for he told me. It's signed,
4 sealed, it's delivered, it's done. But we as the
5 people gathered together in September and said, no,
6 we are not having that.

7 We've been fighting this fight since shutdown
8 Rikers. We have been fighting this fight for years,
9 for decades. My comrade here says survive and
10 punish, which means that there aren't just one story,
11 one experience of incarcerated people. There is not
12 just one uniform voice that speaks for everybody as
13 incarcerated people.

14 We have incarcerated members in no new jails
15 right now that have submitted letters, testimonies,
16 etc., etc., to share their insight.

17 So, when I have people coming to me and saying,
18 oh, I am the only person that can speak on behalf of
19 all incarcerated people, it's untrue. It's false.

20 Also, let's talk about the fact that this plan is
21 going to impact people citywide. Citywide and so
22 when I hear Diana Ayala saying, oh, you can get a
23 grocery store if it's in a jail, or when I have
24 people saying, you can get social services. It's got
25 to be in a jail. That's not the risk that my

2 community needs and we're no longer going to stand
3 for you guys to come out with these plans backroad
4 deal Stephen Levin, remember deference, yeah, we
5 talked about that buddy. We talked about that buddy.

6 And so, I know that my time is about to be over,
7 but I want you all to know that even if you all
8 approve this plan that people are not going to stop
9 fighting. Even if you approve this plan, we are
10 going to be on your asses every single day. Because
11 if you approve this plan, if you approve this plan, I
12 will tell you right now, we are going to make sure
13 that Corey Johnson does not become Mayor. We will
14 make sure that all progressive deals are done. We
15 will make sure that democrats show up. That you show
16 up and you do your job.

17 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you.

18 KEITH FRANCIS WILLIAMS: And you listen to the
19 community board and you listen to the borough
20 presidents and you listen to community members.

21 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you.

22 KEITH FRANCIS WILLIAMS: Who are not bought and
23 paid for by the city.

24 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you. We are going to
25 call up the next panel. Reverend Wendy Calderon,

2 Barrett Ellman, Rachel Carrion. Okay, Rachael is not
3 here, who are you? Wendy Calderon-Payne, okay, thank
4 you. Emma Jordan Simpson and Elizabeth Gaynes.

5 Okay, we should have four; I see three, Reverend
6 Wendy Calderon, Barrett Elman, Emma Jordan Simpson,
7 you are here. Elizabeth Gaynes? So, we're missing
8 Barrett Elman, not here? Okay.

9 Okay, remember to state your name for the record.

10 ELIZABETH GAYNES: Good afternoon. I am
11 Elizabeth Gaynes, President of the Osborne
12 Association.

13 A core part of our mission for the last 85 years
14 is to transform jails for the people that live in
15 them, visit them and work in them. And my
16 predecessor, Austin McCormick was actually the
17 Commissioner of Correction under Mayor LaGuardia and
18 was at Rikers Island pretty much when it opened.

19 My first visit to Rikers was in 1978 and over the
20 last 40 years, I visited as a lawyer, a service
21 provider, and a family member.

22 Over the last 25 years, Osborne has provided
23 discharge planning and vocational programs at Rikers,
24 probably serving more than 75,000 incarcerated people
25 at all jails during that time. We've seen the

2 population go up and down. The words change, the
3 music stays the same and it will continue to play the
4 same sad tune until the Council votes to close Rikers
5 Island.

6 Over the last year, it was really a privilege to
7 be involved in the team of architects and planners
8 that produced this master plan. We ensured that
9 people who have visited and lived there and our staff
10 who work there, were considered in how it would be
11 designed. It's unfortunate that the largest
12 municipal jail union in the country decided to sit
13 this one out, when current jails are inherently
14 unsafe for the people who live and work in them.

15 And better design would allow for better jail
16 management at every level. We don't need to spend
17 millions of dollars for people at McKinsey with no
18 experience in corrections writing algorithms about
19 jail management. We need a better environment.

20 It's probably true that the jails are too tall,
21 and this is largely because Staten Island has somehow
22 been allowed to not participate in what every county
23 in the entire United States has, which is a county
24 jail. It's what we do. We don't like big jails, we
25 don't like police stations, we don't like those

2 things, but everybody calls 911, so we are going to
3 have to precincts, and you are going to have to have
4 jails. Yeah, I know, it's ridiculous what you guys
5 are putting us through here.

6 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you. Thank you. Your
7 time is expired, thank you. Next speaker.

8 ELIZABETH GAYNES: I just want to say, Nelson
9 Mandela said it. He knew a thing or two about jails.
10 It always seems impossible until it's done.

11 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you. Thank you very
12 much.

13 ELIZABETH GAYNES: Honey, your time is way up.

14 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you very much. Thank
15 you.

16 REVEREND EMMA JORDAN SIMPSON: Good afternoon. I
17 am Reverend Emma Jordan Simpson and I am the
18 Executive Pastor of the Concord Baptist Church of
19 Christ located in Bedford-Stuyvesant in Brooklyn.

20 Our church was founded 16 years before the
21 signing of the emancipation proclamation, and we have
22 been fighting for freedom ever since 1847.

23 The question is not do we have the political will
24 to nicely shrink a system? The question is a moral

3 question. It's how long will we continue to fund
4 failure? How long will we continue to fund death?

5 I believe prisons should be abolished period and
6 I lift up Merriam Cobb's definition of what it means
7 to be an abolitionist. It's not some liberal
8 fantasy. It means to work to create the necessary
9 conditions to ensure a future without cages for
10 anybody.

11 When children are born in this city, we will not
12 guarantee them a decent public education, a safe
13 community access to healthcare and a safe place to
14 live, but we will absolutely guarantee them a jail
15 cell and it doesn't matter how much it costs, we will
16 find the money. My fear is that we have become so
17 tolerant of racism and in equity that we are capable
18 of imagining a future that we are not capable of
19 imagining a future that doesn't include jails.

20 I am not forgetting what this city did to the
21 community of Bedford-Stuyvesant when this city
22 installed a jail themed playground at Tompkins Houses
23 for our children to play on. Every time we invest in
24 the fantasy that there will always be people who need
25 to be jailed, we are sinning. And I am here today to

2 say, we need to stop it. Close Rikers and no more
3 new jails.

4 REVEREND WENDY CALDERON-PAYNE: Can you hear me?

5 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Yeah.

6 REVEREND WENDY CALDERON-PAYNE: Thank you so much
7 Council Members and I do appreciate you staying this
8 long to hear everyone's voices. I am going to ask
9 that we all respect each other, but if you don't
10 that's okay because I am going to still keep on
11 talking.

12 REVEREND WENDY CALDERON-PAYNE: My name is
13 Reverend Wendy Calderon-Payne, I am the Executive
14 Director of Bronx Connect.

15 I am asking you today to vote yes, to close
16 Rikers with connections. You have to hold the city
17 as far as you can hold them, but we got to close the
18 hell hole now. Bronx Connect is alternative justice
19 program that for 20 years has offered community
20 alternatives in the Bronx before there was money to
21 do it. Do you understand? It was the South Bronx
22 churches that were challenged to create a system to
23 take young people, so they didn't go to Horizon, so
24 they didn't go to Rikers. So, please don't tell me
25 that I don't know what I am talking about. I have

2 seen kids demoralized, raped, traumatized at Rikers
3 for too long.

4 There is no option to keep Rikers closed without
5 some sort of community alternative and this plan is
6 not the Mayor's plan. This plan began formerly
7 through Glen Martin, the founder of Just Leadership;
8 a formerly incarcerated man and he called all of us
9 together to be one voice to close Rikers and he
10 himself said four years ago, the plan will have to
11 include local community facilities. This was Glen's
12 own words. Google it if you don't believe me. Okay,
13 so what I am saying to you is, the reason, and I ask
14 you to understand this. Council Members, if you
15 don't understand the square footage, we're trying to
16 create a more humane system. A system when people
17 can go to bed in their own room and not have the risk
18 of being raped by their roommate. It's as simple as
19 that.

20 We need a humane system, I am begging you, close
21 Rikers now. Cross into the promise land. Demand a
22 better system, but don't take us back out into the
23 desert. Thank you very much. Amen.

24 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you very much. Ladies
25 and Gentleman, ladies and gentleman, ladies and

2 ladies and ladies and gentleman. Ladies and
3 gentleman, as the Chair of this Subcommittee, I am
4 going to respectfully request that you hold all
5 applause henceforth now and forever more in these
6 chambers.

7 REVEREND WENDY CALDERON-PAYNE: Thank you very
8 much for your time in your chambers.

9 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: What happens when the
10 applause takes place is that you are taking time away
11 from the people that we want to hear from. That you
12 want to hear from. So, we want to make sure that
13 everyone is heard, and we can't do that when we take
14 time out for applause. So, we just really need for
15 you to be respectful to everyone that comes and is
16 courteous enough to be a part of the panel. Of these
17 panels, we take them seriously and we really do need
18 to hear them. We know that you are excited, we get
19 it. We are all excited, we're passionate, we get
20 that, but I really am asking you respectfully to
21 please refrain from applause. We do this in the
22 chambers.

23 And believe me it's very symbolic if you will.
24 It's very, very symbolic. You know in churches, I
25 come from a Black church. We talk about make a

2 joyful noise and we do this. But for the people who
3 are hearing impaired, they cannot hear this. So, we
4 do this because it is symbolic and universal and
5 global. Respectfully, do this. Thank you very much.

6 We're going to call the next panel. Arlene
7 Parks, Justin Pollack, Ben Yi, Lara Burnback, and
8 Barry Wallner.

9 We will recall again, Barry Wallner, Lara
10 Burnback, Ben Yi and Arlene Parks. Seeing two, I
11 call up Constance Lesold. Okay, we are still trying
12 to fill the panel. Mariame Kaba from Project NIA.
13 It's full, great.

14 Good afternoon panel, please remember to state
15 your name and remember to turn the microphone on when
16 you begin. You may begin when you are ready.

17 ARLENE PARKS: Hello everyone, my name is Arlene
18 Parks and I am a lifelong resident of the Mott Haven
19 community and I am also the Vice Chair and CEO of the
20 Diego Beekman Mutual Housing Association that was
21 established in 1974 under the model city's program.

22 I'm here today to ask the body to work with the
23 Bronx Borough President's Office and key stakeholders
24 to get the jail in the Bronx sited correctly.

2 We have significant challenges in Mott Haven and
3 in my neighborhood where that jail is being sited,
4 that does not exist in other communities where the
5 borough – where the jails are at, where the jails are
6 proposed to be sited.

7 We've worked for 22 years, 22, that's a quarter
8 of my life, with community residents working to
9 stabilize that community as we were inflicted with a
10 drug cartel, crime and violence, and even today, with
11 all of the significant gains that we've made, to
12 frequently, we still have challenges with random
13 shootings, drugs, opioid crisis that we are in the
14 midst of. We are in the epicenter of a school that's
15 failed and is not working. We're overburdened with
16 facilities to house the homeless and excepting
17 services in exchange for jail is outrageous. My
18 Council Woman should not be compromised and not have
19 to accept a jail in order to get the services that
20 the City of New York has systematically deprived that
21 community of for decades.

22 It has to stop. We're tired of it. And so, the
23 compromise for us is invest in schools, invest in
24 housing, turn our children from selling drugs on the
25

2 street and committing crime and violence. Make them
3 captains of industry.

4 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you very much,
5 appreciate you.

6 ARLENE PARKS: Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Next speaker.

8 BARRY WALLNER: My name is Barry Wallner. When
9 the program was started under ULURP, the city decided
10 to put four buildings in one project. That means
11 from all regulations, federal on down, when you are
12 voting on it, your voting on if one of those
13 buildings is not acceptable through the federal
14 regulations, they are rejecting the whole project.

15 Now Councilman Koslowitz this morning, talked
16 about traffic. She talked about at four o'clock, the
17 rush hour starts in Queens. In fact, it's now three
18 o'clock. I live across the street, that's because of
19 the bike lanes. The city has not yet installed bike
20 lanes from Yellowstone Boulevard up to Union Turnpike
21 which leads right into the intersection of the four
22 major highways.

23 There is also construction going on on Union
24 Turnpike, which is slowing down traffic. They can't
25 go down Union Turnpike for the next year. The city,

2 when they submitted this application had indicated to
3 us at meetings that the environmental study was not
4 yet complete. This morning, they specifically stated
5 that oh, they will go back and do it in real time.
6 What does real time mean? It means they didn't do it
7 in real time before. They probably did it at one
8 o'clock in the morning.

9 So, now you have an environmental study, that we
10 were told was only partially completed in which once
11 those bike lanes are installed, up to Union Turnpike,
12 it's going to slow down traffic. Like I said, it
13 will only slow down traffic so that rush hour now
14 starts at three, not four o'clock.

15 So, my question is if you are approving this
16 project to go ahead, you have to go back and look at
17 that environmental study to make sure that it is
18 accurate. Because from my perspective, from what I
19 understand, it was partially done. They say they are
20 going to fix up the issues, but they will have to
21 wait a year or more in order to make sure that
22 environmental study is an accurate study. Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you.

24 CONSTANCE LESOLD: My name is Constance Lesold
25 and I am the founder of a group called, The Committee

2 of a Hundred. To make the Brooklyn botanic garden
3 free again.

4 I also work with MTOP over the issues of
5 construction planned in the area and stopping the
6 city's proposals to build - allow the building of
7 huge towers that would block the Botanic Garden.
8 That would put shadows over the Botanic Garden. I
9 had not planned to testify today. I had planned to
10 be down in here and obviously I am down here and was
11 here for four hours standing outside because I am
12 also a professional social worker having worked in
13 psychiatric departments in a number of our city
14 hospitals and others.

15 And I am very concerned about the welfare of
16 people in our prisons and in our hospitals, in our
17 psychiatric hospitals. In neither place are they
18 getting a fair shot at a decent life. They are
19 getting a lot of shots in those hospitals and jails
20 but it's not the kind of shot we want to see.

21 I cannot stand by to not plan to testify. I am
22 obviously not entirely prepared. I cannot stand by
23 though and hear that you plan to spend \$11 billion or
24 more when it all goes up on prisons, when we don't
25 even have a Botanic Garden the children can go to.

2 The people coming out of prison or coming out of
3 homeless shelters, they are coming out of what? Only
4 a free Friday morning, \$15 otherwise.

5 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you.

6 CONSTANCE LESOLD: We cannot have that. I must
7 say that I am familiar with Rikers Island. I have
8 been to Rikers Island to visit people and I will
9 continue to be interested in both the cultural -

10 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you very much. Thank
11 you, next speaker. Thank you, we hear you. Thank
12 you, thank you very much for being here. Next
13 speaker please.

14 MARIAME KABA: Hi everybody, good afternoon. I
15 am Mariame Kaba. I am here today to uplift the
16 legacy of my teachers Bo Brown and Eddie Ellis and
17 Angela Davis and Kathy Minor and countless other
18 incarcerated, formerly incarcerated people who really
19 have taught me over the years how easily so-called
20 reforms actually result in the expansion of the
21 carceral state, rather than its diminution.

22 I'd like to use my two minutes to say a few words
23 about being realistic. Realistic and unrealistic are
24 words that I've come to profoundly dislike, as they
25 seem so often to be used in situations like this to

2 discredit anyone holding open the possibility of
3 making changes that would improve the lives of the
4 poor, of women, of people of color, of queer people,
5 of gender nonconforming people and to be clear,
6 building four new jails is not going to help anyone
7 but the contractors who build them, the bankers who
8 lend the city money for those new cages and the
9 politicians who continue to demagogue public safety.

10 These days, there are a lot of people who say
11 they are sad about mass incarceration and crowded
12 jails and detention centers and police violence and
13 yet, they constantly dismiss serious challenges to
14 these institutions is unrealistic.

15 So, I know unrealistic has been floating around
16 discussions of how to best close Rikers. Let me say,
17 that to accuse those of us opposing the construction
18 of four new jails across the city, as the only
19 possible way to close Rikers or the best way to close
20 Rikers, to call us unrealistic and delusional is to
21 ignore over two hundred years of US history.

22 The Walnut Street jail opened in 1790 as a reform
23 and reformers have been supposedly reforming jails
24 and prisons ever since. We will be back in this
25 room, I promise you in ten years, if these four new

2 facilities are built calling these facilities
3 inhumane. That is the history of the criminal
4 punishment system.

5 So, to me, you want to know what's unrealistic?
6 What's unrealistic is the idea that building new
7 jails will improve anyone's lives. Jails and prisons
8 don't work. They significantly don't reduce any sort
9 of violence and they don't reduce harm. Jails are
10 violence inherently so. Thank you very much.

11 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you very much for your
12 testimony, we appreciate it.

13 Next panel, honorable Matthew D'Emic, Craig
14 Lewis, Curtis Bell, Victor Herrera and Jordan
15 Rosenthal.

16 Once again, honorable Matthew D'Emic, Craig
17 Lewis, Curtis Bell, Victor Herrera and Jordan
18 Rosenthal. I see two. Tamika Graham. Do we have
19 Seymore James? Thank you. Seymore James are you
20 here?

21 SEMORE JAMES: I am here.

22 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you. Lucas Pershing
23 are you here? Okay, great, please remember to state
24 your name for the record. You may begin when you are
25 ready.

3 CRAIG LEWIS: Hello, my name is Craig Lewis. I
4 am from the Bronx; I represent Bronx Connect and the
5 RTG Program from Bronx Connect. I was a part of
6 Bronx 120; it was the biggest gang raid in New York
7 City history. We went federal. I did two years, I
8 copped out to something I didn't do.

9 So, I also went to college. I have major
10 knowledge in both jail. I went to University Bridge
11 Port and Masters.

12 Rikers Island is a place dealing with organized
13 chaos and the headmaster of this organized chaos, who
14 would be the CO's. Organized chaos is a complex
15 situation or process that appears chaotic while
16 having enough order to achieve progress or goals.
17 Now, I am not saying get rid of all CO's, what I am
18 saying is, we need to revolutionize the culture of
19 these jails and by doing so is a fresh start.

20 So, I am for closing Rikers Island due to the
21 fact that I know from experience that there is
22 officers allowing gang wars, ill treatment, allowing
23 contraband, hurting inmates, making gangs handle
24 their dirty work. Jails are supposed to rehabilitate
25 us, restorate us, and cause us to learn from our
mistakes but that's not what's happening. People in

2 my culture have been going in there and we are coming
3 out warriors of Rikers. We've been coming in there
4 and we fight each other and there's a head person
5 that could control that and could stop that and it's
6 not happening.

7 So, if we close Rikers and even if you open up
8 new jails, which you most likely will anyway, if you
9 try to stop the culture of this that's going on
10 inside for those who have been there, who know what
11 I'm talking about, knows that I am not lying. Maybe
12 we could make a change. Now as far as Rikers Island
13 is concerned, when I was - Okay, well, I am for close
14 Rikers and you know the authority reevaluated. Thank
15 you.

16 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: If we only had more time.
17 Thank you, brother.

18 CRAIG LEWIS: Alright.

19 MATTHEW D'EMIC: Good afternoon, my name is
20 Matthew D'Emic and I am the administrative judge for
21 criminal matters in Kings County Supreme Court. I am
22 also a member of Judge Lippman's Commission.

23 Now, when Judge Lippman asked me to join his
24 commission, I was highly skeptical of the idea that
25 Rikers Island could or should be closed. However,

2 after a year of meetings and listening to the
3 experiences of former Rikers detainees, their
4 families, correctional mental health and other
5 experts, and most importantly, visits to Rikers
6 Island, I am now firmly convinced that as a
7 community, we have no other choice.

8 I am also the presiding Judge in the Brooklyn
9 Mental Health Court and in that capacity, have
10 experienced the decompensation of accused individuals
11 on Rikers Island and it's deeply dehumanizing effect
12 on people living with serious mental illness.

13 Smaller, local facilities will certainly be a
14 better option for them. In fact, for all
15 incarcerated defendants, jails that are closer to the
16 courts, their families and their attorney's as
17 opposed to the isolated outpost that is Rikers, serve
18 justice and alleviate inequalities unworthy of our
19 city.

20 There are many practical reasons to close Rikers
21 Island. Having witnessed the decrepit dank
22 conditions in which we house detainees and the spirit
23 crushing travel to and from the Island, both for them
24 and their families, there is one overriding reason
25 for closing it.

2 It's a basement of human dignity. No person, no
3 matter the accusation, should lose his or her
4 personal dignity. Whatever insults human dignity
5 dishonors us. Rikers Island dishonors us. Thank you
6 for your courtesy.

7 VICTOR HERRERA: Good afternoon, hi, my name is
8 Victor Herrera . I am a member of Just Leadership
9 and the Close Rikers Campaign. I am also a lifelong
10 member of New York City, a citizen.

11 Rikers must close in the fastest possible
12 timeline. Rikers must close because of the history
13 of violence and brutality in which I personally
14 experienced on Rikers Island. And the fear and the
15 traumatic stress that resulted from it.

16 Those of us who have been there and are still
17 affected by it. The brutal sorts I explained and the
18 conditions I was subjected to on Rikers, have
19 affected my health both physically and mentally.

20 Thankfully, the last time I was on Rikers was
21 years ago, but within the last year, my brother was
22 on Rikers Island, and my nephew was on the floating
23 extension of Rikers Island, the boat.

24 Another facility unfit for humans. The only way
25 to heal from all the trauma that many of us have

2 experienced in these sites of torture is to begin the
3 process of closure.

4 I support the building of borough-based
5 facilities as a first step toward reducing the jail
6 population and taking a new approach. Because of the
7 advocacy of the people who have survived Rikers, we
8 will soon see historic pretrial reforms implemented
9 and the Mayor's Office has reduced the plan capacity
10 of the borough-based facilities to 4,000.

11 The City Council must also include investments in
12 mental health resources and alternatives to
13 incarceration in this plan, so that New York City can
14 plan for less than 3,000 people in detention.

15 For anyone who is still detained, we need to make
16 sure they are housed in much better conditions that
17 support progressive rehabilitation rather than
18 punishment and are located centrally where the
19 community can be involved.

20 We have no illusions that new facilities will
21 solve all of the problems. Changes are also needed
22 in favor of something more like a case management
23 type of approach, but nothing about the current jails
24 encourages that or provides space for that.

2 As a lifelong advocate, I will be there to fight
3 for those changes. The time to close Rikers is now
4 and we cannot delay it. At this very moment, a
5 thousand people are sitting there on a penal colony
6 suffering. We have to start somewhere, and we have
7 to move now.

8 I ask you to vote yes, so that we can ensure that
9 no one is left behind on Rikers. The only guarantee
10 of no new jails is the same old jails. Thank you.

11 LUCAS PERSHING: Hi, good afternoon Council
12 Members. My name is Lucas Pershing, I work at Trinity
13 Wall Street Church, which is a few blocks down the
14 road where a historic church has been involved in the
15 Close Rikers Campaign for a long time.

16 So, I would like to read you a statement on
17 behalf of one of our Priests Reverend Winnie
18 Varghese. Trinity Church Wall Street urges the City
19 Council to vote yes to close the jail complex on
20 Rikers Island and support a system of modern borough-
21 based jails with provisions that decrease
22 incarceration and build a system of justice worthy of
23 our great City.

24 Rikers Island is a stain on New York that
25 contributes to human suffering, broken families, and

2 community deterioration. It's cultural violence and
3 inhumane conditions creates a human rights crisis
4 that impacts our families and neighbors and the
5 people who are employed there.

6 Many of our congregants have been detained on
7 Rikers often before their trial with great physical
8 and spiritual costs inflicted on their souls.

9 Furthermore, we know that over 90 percent of those
10 detained on Rikers are Black and Brown and over 40
11 percent have a diagnosed mental health condition.

12 The tragedy of Rikers is therefore a family, racial
13 and social justice issue and we must close it as soon
14 as possible.

15 A modern borough-based system of jails that
16 prioritizes rehabilitation in family unity and helps
17 prepare our neighbors to live full and wholesome
18 lives is the morally right plan to advance.

19 At the moment, when family members or clergy wish
20 to wish to visit a loved one detained at Rikers, they
21 must invest an entire day for an hour-long visit.

22 And we know the successful rehabilitation and health
23 outcomes require that a person have connection to
24 their families, social services, and educational
25 programming and a system of modern borough-based

3 jails supports the environment for these kind of
4 outcomes to happen.

5 The tragedy of Rikers must not be replicated in
6 the new system of justice we are building in our
7 city. To that end, the following provisions should
8 be included in your plan moving forward.

9 One, we must invest in alternative to
10 incarceration, so that detaining a person becomes the
11 absolute last resort after other options have been
12 exhausted.

13 Two, we must invest in communities, so that our
14 neighbors have vibrant opportunities and our
15 neighborhoods have vibrant opportunities and health
16 outcomes that are robust.

17 And finally, the era of incarcerating people for
18 mental health and substance abuse issues must end.

19 None of this can happen as long as Rikers stays
20 open and we urge you to support a plan that focuses
21 on decarceration, closing Rikers and building
22 borough-based jails. Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you very much for your
24 testimony.

25 TAMIKA GRAHAM: Good afternoon everyone. My name
is Tamika Graham. I am a lifelong New York City

2 resident. I am formerly incarcerated, and I am
3 human. I am testifying today in support of the plan
4 to go from twelve jails to four borough-based
5 facilities.

6 Along with other formerly incarcerated people, I
7 am also urging the City Council to ensure that this
8 plan also comes with commitments to further
9 investments and alternatives to incarceration and
10 treatment for mental health needs.

11 Rikers Island must be closed down immediately.
12 It serves no positive purpose. I was on Rikers
13 Island for the first time in 1995, while at the
14 tender age of 16. I had to learn to develop a thick
15 skin and I had to learn how to survive. Otherwise,
16 Rikers Island would have chewed me up alive and spit
17 me out.

18 When I was back on Rikers Island years later, I
19 found that toxic culture as unchanged as the toxic
20 environment. Because of the work of formerly
21 incarcerated advocates, we've made progress. With
22 Raise the Age, adolescents are no longer on Rikers
23 and we pass bill reform that will keep thousands of
24 people across the city and state from spending even a
25 day in jail. But there is more work to do and not

2 everyone will be free yet. Rikers is not an
3 environment fit for any human being and we won't
4 leave anyone behind there. The time is now, and we
5 cannot delay. Moving quickly with this approval
6 process is the right thing to do to match the urgency
7 of the human rights crisis on Rikers Island and the
8 poor conditions on other existing city jails.

9 In closing Rikers, we must also invest in our
10 communities. The downsizing of the jail system will
11 set us up to permanently reduce how much money we
12 spend on it each year. It costs taxpayers \$300,000
13 to jail one human on Rikers annually. We could
14 instead use it for schools, recreation centers, and
15 restorative justice centers, credible messengers,
16 alternatives to incarceration, job training, housing,
17 treatment programs, growing gardens and anything else
18 that fits the needs and betterment of the community.

19 These are the type of investments that will help
20 us over time continue to reduce the jail population
21 in this city and the prison population across the
22 state. But we cannot get to that point without first
23 crossing this threshold. So, please, pass this plan
24 and heed the demands of Close Rikers Campaign to make
25

2 this plan to shrink the system, improve conditions
3 and invest in communities. Thank you.

4 JORDAN ROSENTHAL: Hi, my name is Jordan
5 Rosenthal and I am the Senior Associate of Policy and
6 Advocacy at College and Community Fellowship. A
7 nonprofit that partners with women with criminal
8 convictions, to help them earn their college degrees.
9 So that they, their families and communities can
10 thrive.

11 Just as the physical structure of Rikers has
12 contributed to more violence, intentional design
13 features can instead honor dignity, increase
14 rehabilitation and ultimately improve public safety.
15 There is a strong body of research connecting ones
16 physical environment to their emotional and
17 psychological wellbeing, mood, and behavior.

18 Access to natural light, outdoor areas and ample
19 communal spaces are key components of this practice
20 and would further serve to enhance the success of
21 these new facilities.

22 There must be a prioritization of designing
23 spaces that can support robust programming and
24 services, such as counseling groups, education,
25 vocational programming, family meetings, recreation,

3 and spiritual guidance. This includes creating
4 spaces for medical, mental health and dependency
5 treatment. Including prenatal and maternity care and
6 gender reaffirming treatment for transgender and
7 gender nonconforming individuals.

8 All of these require more space, which is why we
9 cannot in response to nimbyism seek to reduce the
10 height of each facility. So much that these improved
11 conditions are no longer possible.

12 This is by no means the end of the fight. We
13 must continue to push for better and more
14 alternatives to incarceration, decriminalization for
15 of low-level offenses and eliminating jail for
16 technical violations of parole, among the range of
17 needed reforms.

18 At this moment and time, the strongest measure we
19 can take to decarcerate NYC is to close Rikers and
20 build smaller, safer, borough-based facilities. I
21 urge you to vote yes and include your plan with the
22 improvements that the Close Rikers Coalition is
23 calling for.

24 Thank you for you time.

25 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you very much for your
time as well. Thank you, panel. Thanks so much.

2 Okay, we're going to call up Jose Saldana,
3 Victoria Cambranes, Carlyn Cowen, Nancy Kong and
4 Janine Cope.

5 Once again, it's Jose Saldana, Victoria
6 Cambranes, Carlyn Cowen, Nancy Kong and Janine Cope.
7 Howard Huey, Matilda Wysocki.

8 Panel members, please remember to state your name
9 for the record and remember to turn on the
10 microphone. When the red light is on, you know it's
11 on. You may begin.

12 NANCY KONG: Okay, my name is Nancy Kong, I am a
13 lifelong resident of Chinatown. I live blocks from
14 ground zero and blocks from the Tenement and Housing
15 Project where I was born and raised.

16 Imagine a child growing up in poverty. A child
17 whose family were victims of crime, violent crime.
18 But somehow coming out of that environment and then
19 choosing to live in and fight for that community.
20 That child was me and why I am uniquely qualified to
21 talk about my community and the impact that this jail
22 will have on my neighborhood. Change starts with
23 real investments in our communities and all
24 communities of low income and people of color. It is
25 not about building new mega jails in them.

2 I form Neighbors United Below Canal and Boroughs
3 United because Mayor de Blasio, Speaker Corey
4 Johnson, and my Council Member Margaret Chin, who is
5 not present, resoundingly ignored the communities
6 concerns, the real hazards that we've identified, the
7 illegal nature of the ULURP process and quite
8 frankly, the sheer arrogance of them marching into
9 our community and imposing this ridiculous jail. An
10 experimental, untested and unprecedented jail in the
11 middle of an already densely populated and neglected
12 neighborhood.

13 This is modern day colonialism. Judge Lippman
14 said that if you oppose this plan, you support mass
15 incarceration. It is this type of racial
16 insensitivity and fair mongering rhetoric that has
17 suppressed so many voices. It is deliberately
18 pitting one minority community against another. You
19 have the power to do better. Crime rates in
20 Chinatown are increasing, they are not decreasing
21 despite the Mayor's rhetoric. Building new jails is
22 not the answer. We need true progressive thinking,
23 not this outdated and archaic plan. We need bold,
24 new leadership. Leaders who have courage and vision
25 to use the LA example, where their City Council

2 members voted against a \$2 billion-dollar jail,
3 managed by DOC in favor of investing a community
4 based mental health care facilities managed by the
5 Department of Health or the Seattle example, instead
6 of jailing people caught with small amounts of drug –

7 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you.

8 NANCY KONG: They are sent to treatment programs.

9 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you.

10 NANCY KONG: People should not be going to jail
11 for services or housing they need.

12 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you very much for your
13 testimony today. Thank you.

14 VICTORIA CAMBRANES: Hello everyone. My name is
15 Victoria Cambranes. I am a candidate for City
16 Council in 2021, District 33 and a lifelong Brooklyn
17 itte.

18 District 33 includes the Brooklyn Detention
19 Complex, which I agree with our current Councilman,
20 Councilman Levin that there are a lot of issues with
21 that detention center. However, if you look at the
22 current population of that detention center, it's
23 about 360 people out of a capacity of 815. It's
24 already well below 50 percent of the capacity.

2 If you look at the capacity of Rikers Island
3 currently, it's about 7,290 people and that's about
4 30 percent of what Rikers can hold. So, in the
5 meantime, we're already talking about demolition
6 starting in January, removing all the inmates in
7 December. People, sorry, people, removing them in
8 December and housing them at Rikers. So, if this
9 project is going to be completed in 2026 and
10 potentially a lot later than that, with budgets and
11 the way the city run, we have to consider that there
12 are going to be housed in Rikers Island who were in
13 the Brooklyn Detention Complex for the majority of
14 their time.

15 And so, the people in the meantime, are going to
16 be suffering through Rikers anyway. So, what are we
17 going to do about that in the meantime, is a big
18 question that no one is asking. And in the long
19 term, you know, Rikers Island is a facility for – the
20 largest mental health facility in New York City.
21 Half of that money at least can be used to ensure
22 that we have proper mental health care for people who
23 really need it.

24 CARLYN COWEN: Good afternoon, my name is Carlyn
25 Cowen. I am the Chief Policy and Public Affairs

3 Officer of the Chinese American Planning Counsel.

4 CPC was founded in 1965 after the end of the County's

5 Exclusion Act and we have community centers in

6 Chinatown. Two of our program sites are right across

7 from where the proposed Manhattan Detention Complex

8 expansion would be. CPC affirms that Rikers must

9 close now. In fact, it should have been closed long

10 ago. But we are being given a false choice when we

11 are told that the only way to close Rikers is to open

12 new jails.

13 CPC believes that as Asian Americans we should

14 acknowledge that our Black and Brown, Black and

15 Latinx, folks of color are disproportionately harmed

16 by Rikers and by jails and that as Asian Americans,

17 it is our responsibility to stand in solidarity with

18 them and to refuse to be used as a wedge in this

19 issue.

20 We oppose the building of new jails. The

21 expansion of the Manhattan Detention Complex.

22 Rather, what we need to do is invest in our

23 communities. We need to invest in the social

24 services and the mental health service, and the

25 community services that serve as alternatives to

incarceration and keep people from being jailed to

2 begin with. We do not need to construct new jails,
3 we need to invest in our communities, we need to
4 invest in mental health, rather than using our jails
5 a mental health facilities and we do not support the
6 idea that there is the only way to close Rikers is to
7 build new jails. Thank you.

8 HOWARD HUEY: Hi, my name is Howard Huey. I live
9 a block away from 124-125 White Street, the Manhattan
10 Detention Center. I am also a member of Neighbors
11 United Below Canal Boroughs United and also on the
12 Board of Town Towers.

13 Dear Councilmen's, all through this long ULURP
14 process, it has been emphasized the importance of
15 community engagement including at the start of this
16 meeting.

17 I and many other residents have been thoroughly
18 engaged throughout this process. We have attended
19 many of the community board one of three meetings, at
20 both your land use hearing and as well as the full
21 board meetings. We have provided testimony that has
22 been incorporated in the community board decisions.
23 I have also visited over a hundred businesses around
24 the Manhattan Detention Center. Over 99 percent of
25

2 these have readily signed petitions against this
3 massive jail.

4 The overwhelming comment when speaking to them,
5 they say, this is a crazy idea, building such a large
6 jail in this neighborhood. This is not a nimbi
7 response, as these people have been working every day
8 right in the shadows of the jail without any
9 complaints.

10 So, I ask, what does community engagement mean?
11 If the community boards vote no to this plan, the
12 businesses and the residents in this committee vote
13 no and have signed petitions against this plan, the
14 Manhattan Borough president has stated that the scope
15 of this project is too large, and she reiterated that
16 today. Margaret Chin, herself, has commented about
17 the size of the jail and she has also reiterated her
18 concerns about the size.

19 The city has however, not revised the scope of
20 this plan and still calls for 1.2 million square
21 foot, 495-foot-tall skyscraper that exceeds the
22 zoning limits. It requires the City Planning Council
23 to provide a special zoning exemption against the
24 communities wishes.

2 Community engagement has no meeting, if this plan
3 is allowed to continue, I ask that the City Council
4 vote no to this plan. I ask that Council person
5 Margaret Chin to listen to the Community Boards,
6 listen to our constituents and vote no to this plan.

7 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you.

8 MATILDA WYSOCKI: Hello, I am Matilda Wysocki, I
9 am a member of Picture the Homeless and we are
10 calling for Rikers to be closed immediately as well
11 as there be no new jails.

12 The homeless population in New York City has only
13 increased in the past few years. People are going in
14 and out of our criminal justice system regularly and
15 struggle to get work and housing and end up back in
16 jail. There are billions of dollars that could go to
17 better homeless services or whatever people in our
18 communities want but this is probably the worst way
19 to be spending that. And we're regularly
20 criminalized. This is a nasty loop where we're going
21 into jails, out to the streets or shelters and so on
22 and so forth.

23 More jails is only going to accelerate that
24 process when we're criminalized for trying to pee or
25 protect ourselves from cops that kick us. If we're

2 just sleeping and because they can because they got
3 that power.

4 So, we at Picture the Homeless hope that you all
5 will be able to work with people going in and out and
6 if there is all this money that isn't going to
7 housing that could or any other community initiative,
8 just put it there. It's not rocket science.

9 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you very much. Thank
10 you, panel.

11 Curtis Bell, Tyler Nims, Zachary Katznelson,
12 Akilah Tomlinson and Daniel White. Once again,
13 Curtis Bell, Tyler Nims, Zachary, I will say Zachary
14 Katz, sorry Zachary. Akilah Tomlinson and Daniel
15 White.

16 Panel remember to state your name. You may
17 begin.

18 CURTIS BELL: Activist for the Catalyst Center
19 for Health Justice and Equity. I am going to give
20 you a unique interpretation today. We heard many
21 things. I am formerly incarcerated. I was
22 incarcerated at the age of 17 to about 39.

23 I bring you a very unique experience from this
24 aspect. Prisons are for one the greatest blighter of
25 hope. It robs, it steals from people. It steals

2 something very fundamentally inhumane from the souls
3 of all of us. It could be your mother, your father,
4 but people leaving those conditions never leave the
5 same.

6 There is no such thing as a humane jail, but
7 there is a such thing as a forward-thinking
8 therapeutic jail that is designed behind
9 rehabilitation. As a man, I am a direct product of
10 the crack epidemic.

11 Policies designed to attack the dealer and the
12 user. So, if your mother was a dealer and your
13 father was a user, what happened to the child? The
14 war on drugs did not account for people like me.
15 What they gave children like me was the foster care
16 to prison pipeline. The jail to prison pipeline, but
17 I'm also tempered by the idea that we don't live in a
18 utopian society nor can we build one. Because we are
19 fundamentally flawed and fragile as human beings.
20 And if that's the case, that means crime will exist.

21 And people will commit crimes. I know people
22 right now who will not stop committing crimes. So, I
23 am asking this board in this committee to pass this
24 to close Rikers Island, build four humane jails with
25 accountability.

2 Accountability is what we need. There is a
3 fundamental distrust of government, there is a
4 fundamental distrust of each other, but at some
5 point, we have to have faith in our legislative
6 officials, and we got to hold them accountable. No
7 system is perfect. We make it perfect.

8 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you so much, appreciate
9 it.

10 CURTIS BELL: Thank you.

11 TYLER NIMS: My name is Tyler Nims, I lead the
12 staff at the Lippman Commission. There has been a
13 lot of testimony today about the need for change in
14 the justice system in this city and there is
15 unanimous agreement in this room, that the jails on
16 Rikers Island are places of misery and pain and have
17 been that way for decades. There is nothing that I
18 can say today that will express this more powerfully
19 than the words of the people who have been locked up
20 there. Many of whom you've already heard from.

21 It is long past time to put an end to this place.
22 This plan comes before the City Council with a land
23 use application for borough jails, but it is part of
24 a much broader effort to put an end to Rikers and
25 it's legacy. That effort is already making a

2 difference. In less than three years, there are
3 3,000 fewer people who are incarcerated in our city
4 which is proof of the power of this idea. But
5 conditions at Rikers are as bad today as they have
6 ever been for those who work there, for those who are
7 incarcerated there and for those who must visit their
8 loved ones there. This plan is a chance to ensure
9 that the much lower number of people who are
10 incarcerated in the future and those who work and
11 visit these facilities are treated better.

12 There are some people who have argued that this
13 plan provides no guarantee that Rikers Island will
14 close but voting no to this plan will guarantee that
15 those jails remain open. Please vote yes, thank you.

16 ZACHARY KATZNELSON: Good afternoon, my name is
17 Zachary Katznelson. I am a Policy Director at the
18 Lippman Commission.

19 Thank you for the opportunity to testify and
20 thank you for listening to all of us today.

21 How are we going to close Rikers? We need to
22 invest in our people, we need to invest in our
23 communities, we need to invest in jobs, in housing,
24 in mental health treatment and substance dependence
25 treatment. We need it all and we need it now.

3 We want as few people locked up as absolutely
4 possible and the best way to do that is to invest in
5 our people.

6 At the same time, almost 40,000 people cycle
7 through our jails every single year. 7,000 souls sit
8 in our jails right now and what about them? We
9 cannot leave anyone behind. No one, no one should be
10 subjected to the conditions in Rikers. Nobody should
11 be subjected to the conditions that exist in the
12 borough jails today. They all need to be torn down,
13 all eleven of them and replaced with something
14 better.

15 An opportunity for people to actually have access
16 to reentry services. An opportunity for people to be
17 safe. An opportunity for people to be close to their
18 families, to their loved ones, to lawyers, to Judges,
19 so they can actually have a chance to fight for
20 justice in their cases. And have a fighting chance
21 for success when they get out.

22 We have this opportunity this moment and it's
23 rare, believe me, we know through history.
24 Generations ago, we tried to close Rikers. It came
25 again in the 60's, 70's and the 80's. Again, ten
years ago, we never got this far. We say no, now,

2 Rikers stays with us for a generation more and how
3 many more of our loved ones will be hurt and harmed?

4 What ripple affect will that bring to our city.

5 But if we say yes, if we say yes to closing Rikers,
6 if we say yes to putting people, anyone who is
7 incarcerated and God willing soon one day there will
8 be very, very few and none. But until that day
9 comes, they must be safe, they must be taken care of.

10 We have a responsibility as this city to treat our
11 people. They are our people, our loved ones, treat
12 them all with dignity.

13 I have asked that you please vote yes. Yes, and
14 invest. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you.

16 AKILAH TOMLINSON: Hi, my name is Akilah
17 Tomlinson and I am one of many advocates of part of
18 Just Leadership USA, Close Rikers Campaign and we
19 support closing Rikers, shrinking the jail system,
20 and improving conditions for anyone who remains
21 detained.

22 I ask you to vote yes to this proposal with
23 modifications to ensure that investments are made in
24 the kind of community resources for alternatives to
25

3 incarceration can replace the jail system in the
4 future.

5 For our Campaign, the first priority is to reduce
6 the jail population as much as we can and as fast as
7 we can. My brother was held on Rikers for over 600
8 days waiting for his case to go to trial. I know
9 that Rikers is not a place for human being to be
10 because that environment is not safe. My brother is
11 not the same after the time he has spent on Rikers
12 Island.

13 My brother was remanded to jail before his trial.
14 That means that even with the important changes that
15 have passed in Albany this year that will reduce the
16 jail population, my brother would still be held.

17 My experience as a visitor there is almost as
18 tragic as the person being detained there. I had to
19 reserve an entire day to visit my brother as the trip
20 alone is both mentally and physically exhausting.

21 Once I arrived at the Island, I had to strip
22 myself of anything that is considered a threat,
23 whether that be my jewelry or something as simple as
24 a pen. Afterwards, I would have to go through
25 security and then take a bus to the facility where my
brother was being housed. Where I had to go through

2 security again. Sometimes I would wait an hour to
3 see him because he was waiting for an escort. The
4 city can change this, and we urge the City Council to
5 dedicate yourself to advancing and improving this
6 plan.

7 Through the modifications, the Close Rikers
8 Campaign is demanding the City could reduce the
9 average daily jail population to less than 3,000
10 individuals. By investing ineffective alternatives
11 to incarceration, into mental health resources,
12 including supportive housing.

13 Please help us ensure the end of Rikers Island.
14 Thank you.

15 DANIEL WHITE: Good afternoon, my name is Daniel
16 White. I am an adult education teacher at the
17 Fortune Society. I am honored to be here today and
18 be part of this hearing alongside my students and
19 fellow Beyond Rosie's Coalition members.

20 Decades of advocacy led the foundation to bring
21 us all here today, to discuss a plan that will reduce
22 the number of people confined in New York City jails
23 by 2/3. Such a giant step forward to decarceration
24 in our city will create a real time pathway to
25 closing Rikers Island.

2 Reform so radical many people say it's
3 impossible. Maybe it was impossible, until people
4 directly impacted by the harm of Rikers Island causes
5 this and says this has to stop.

6 New York City can be better. Our society must do
7 better. As a result of this brave leadership, our
8 city finds itself at this imperative crossroads
9 facing us today. A chance in history to continue the
10 status quo or an opportunity for change.

11 Focusing resources on punishment, isolation and
12 deterrence does not facilitate success upon reentry.
13 Which is why we cannot talk about improving Rikers
14 Island as a permanent solution. Although improvement
15 such as adding programming offered by agencies like
16 the Fortune Society have been made and we acknowledge
17 these step are in the right direction, they pale in
18 comparison to a complete overhaul of the plan the
19 city has today.

20 No matter what, Rikers Island should be far away.
21 Intentionally out of sight and out of mind.
22 Continuing to intentionally isolate people far away
23 from their loved ones, communities, supportive
24 services, legal guidance, etc., it will continue the
25 stigma and shame of being on Rikers Island.

2 As long as incarceration exist, the issue and the
3 people it effects should not be cast away as someone
4 else's problem. Because this is a societal problem
5 and it must be dealt with as such.

6 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you. Thank you, panel.
7 Thank you for being here today and your time.
8 Loraine Fletcher, Roy Caldwood, Genie Chin, Stephen
9 Freed, and K letter K, Elliot Felix. Elliot Felix and
10 K of Survived and Punished, Letter K, Noel Frieze of
11 No New Jails.

12 Panel, thank you very much. Please remember to
13 state your name and make sure that the microphone is
14 on. You may begin.

15 STEVEN FREED: Thank you. My name is Stephen
16 Freed, I am resident of Chinatown. I live one block
17 from the proposed jail.

18 I am also an architect and a member of Neighbors
19 United Below Canal Street. I have with me a
20 rendering that we prepared as a community, mainly
21 because the ULURP didn't have clear images in it
22 showing the magnitude of what the proposal really is.
23 As you can see from this, on the right side, this
24 building completely overwhelms the neighborhood.
25 This is the proposed 1.3 million square foot scheme.

2 It has no setbacks and it covers 100 percent of
3 the lot. Those are the tenants of the zoning
4 ordinance that have been in effect since 1916 that
5 make the city livable and the Council is being asked
6 to vote on a change in zoning that would change those
7 rules for this area to be custom made to fit this
8 scheme. And as we've heard, the scheme is not fully
9 baked, and it needs work.

10 So, the plan which should be happening here and
11 the Lippman - and back to Lippman Commission. Judge
12 Lippman himself, said he did not envision jails this
13 big. So, this should be broken up into multiple
14 sites if Rikers is to be closed and there is no one
15 in our community who is saying Rikers should not be
16 closed. But this is not the right plan and somehow
17 there is a panic it sounds like, that if you don't
18 vote yes today, nothing will ever happen. I don't
19 believe that. There are other sites within lower
20 Manhattan like Pike Street with an underutilized DOT
21 facility where some of this program can go.

22 So, this is certainly not smaller, the theme of
23 Lippman is smaller, safer, fairer, absolutely not
24 smaller, this is bigger. It doesn't work.

25 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you.

2 UNIDENTIFIED: [INAUDIBLE 4:06:22].

3 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Is the microphone on?

4 ROY CALDWOOD: Oh, I am sorry. My name is Roy
5 Caldwood. I am retired Assistant Deputy Warden from
6 the New York City Department of Correction.

7 I retired in 1976. I worked on Rikers Island for
8 13 years. I was present on Rikers Island when the
9 first detainees were sent there. They were
10 adolescents who were housed in Brooklyn.

11 The Department broke with tradition. It always
12 kept detainees close to where they lived. When the
13 detainees became more Black and Brown, that's when
14 they decided to make a change. They decided to send
15 them to Rikers Island, which was a home for inmates
16 who had been convicted. There, they were sentenced
17 from six months a one year. The Department had three
18 buildings in which they could house the newly
19 arriving adolescents.

20 One, was brand new institution. Another one was
21 one that was not very old, relatively modern at that
22 time of life. The third was the penitentiary. The
23 penitentiary was build as the name implies,
24 penitents, punishment. It housed sentenced adults,
25 they served from six months to a year.

2 Now, the penitentiary had a central bathroom,
3 when the inmates returned from work in the fields,
4 they entered into the bath house where they took
5 baths, showers, and received clean clothes. The
6 penitentiary, the pen, had approximately six housing
7 cell blocks. They all had fair spaces and toilets.

8 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Mr. Caldwood, I am going to
9 ask you to wrap up the time is up.

10 ROY CALDWOOD: I'm sorry, I can't hear you.

11 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: We are going to have to ask
12 you to wrap up, the time is up.

13 ROY CALDWOOD: Well, I am going to come to the
14 point real quick. It's a long story.

15 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: We can't take a long story.

16 ROY CALDWOOD: I am going to stop right now, I am
17 going to stop right now, but I am here to tell you
18 that those detainees were housed in the most
19 horrendous conditions. They had no place to take a
20 bath for months. No access to telephones. No
21 contact visits. I can go on and on. Packed in there
22 like sardines over 300 to a cell block. It was
23 horrendous.

24 In spite of all that, the Black Warden James
25 Thomas, he succeeded in convincing the overwhelming

2 majority of those detainees that we had concerns
3 about them, we cared about them. Not through
4 speeches and talks but through positive actions that
5 the detainees appreciated.

6 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you.

7 ROY CALDWOOD: And they shared their
8 appreciations by the way they conducted themselves,
9 self-disciplined.

10 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you.

11 ROY CALDWOOD: I would like to present you before
12 I leave with some material.

13 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: We will take the material,
14 but we've got to stop you for now. Time is up, thank
15 you so much.

16 ROY CALDWOOD: And I ask you, I don't have
17 copies, so eventually you could return some?

18 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: That's fine.

19 ROY CALDWOOD: I am also giving you a book that I
20 have written. This I am giving you. My little book
21 and I am certain this is evidence of everything that
22 I have said. I hope you enjoy it.

23 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you so very much. You
24 can applaud for that, just this once. Thank you.

2 GENIE CHIN: Okay, I am Genie Chin, I live two
3 blocks from jails. The entire borough-based jail
4 process has displayed some of the most blatantly
5 shameful abuses of city government power under the
6 veneer of progress reform, lack of true community
7 engagement, outrageously flawed process and
8 nontransparent deals have colored and rivaled some of
9 the worst of Donald Trump's lies and dirty tricks.

10 Truly progressive cities like Los Angeles and
11 Seattle are boldly reimagining a society where the
12 mentally and medically ill can be treated in smaller,
13 humane community care models in detainees own
14 neighborhoods and the incarcerated are reintegrated
15 into society in well thought out programs.

16 While New York City's government is racing to
17 ramp through billion-dollar skyscrapers while
18 skyscraper jails are destroying their neighbors
19 neighborhoods.

20 In Chinatown, our location between three existing
21 jails, particularly the Metropolitan Correctional
22 Center has already put us through the harrowing
23 excesses of 911's homeland security severe street
24 lockdowns and take away of public spaces, this
25 collapsed Chinatown's economy, it destroyed our

2 surface transportation network and it crippled our
3 emergency service access taking more than 15 years of
4 street battles lawsuits and activism to recover.

5 During this period, police headquarters callously
6 caused Chinatown, 911 collateral damage. Chinatown
7 is again in the cross hares of city government
8 assault guns.

9 I ask City Council Members to treat our impacted
10 communities fairly, humanely and compassionately by
11 halting, rethinking and resetting this outrageously
12 flawed jail process. What if you or your mother, or
13 your grandmother lived next door to one of these
14 monolithic out of scale jails? How would you vote?
15 Thank you.

16 RICHARD NOEL: My name is Richard Noel and I am
17 Co-Director of Community Organizer Detainee Apartment
18 Project and I am also an organizer with No New Jail
19 in New York City. I support the immediate closure of
20 Rikers Island without building a single new jail in
21 New York City.

22 In this vision, I am guided by the analysis of
23 incarcerated organizers with no new jails, who oppose
24 the city's violent oppressive and [INAUDIBLE 4:18:09]
25 Plan.

2 Today, I am going to read a testimony of our
3 Mayor who has been locked up for 28 years and who
4 summarizes his experience of abuse while incarcerated
5 as two recounts. De Blasio's jails special plan is
6 an irresponsible way to utilize the city's time and
7 resources. Reshuffle the deck of the cards are still
8 dealt and played accordingly. Move the jail around,
9 there are still jails.

10 The prison expansion boom explodes the inherent
11 torture and dehumanization of profiting from cheap
12 labor on exposed corrections as a means of a way of
13 housing Americas poor and disenfranchised. Prisons
14 degrade the human nature of both the incarcerated and
15 the staff.

16 If one finds a moment of clarity to come true the
17 records of one's past, then find restoration to
18 repair old wounds, then correction is possible.
19 However, more often than not, the mental anguish,
20 fatality to the body and soul becomes [inaudible
21 4:19:50] for one to overcome without extraordinary
22 help. Help that the system does not or is not
23 equipped to provide.

24 Every crime in America has such a political
25 subtext that necessitates pardoning and correcting by

2 wholesome efforts. Most participants in criminal
3 exploits are bought into poverty. When we see a
4 person, who is run 4:20:32, we must see it envision
5 of highlight for sight to apprehend a social efforts.

6 The Mayor just spent \$11 billion in a new
7 transformative justice contacts. We are each person
8 who has -

9 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Please wrap it up.

10 RICHARD NOEL: I stand to say that no new jail,
11 close Rikers now and no new jail. The money should
12 be used to invest in the community. The money should
13 be used to correct -

14 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you.

15 RICHARD NOEL: More job opportunities,
16 sustainable and affordable housing -

17 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you.

18 RICHARD NOEL: For the community. We don't want
19 new jobs in our community.

20 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: We hear you.

21 RICHARD NOEL: And we want Rikers to be closed
22 down right now.

23 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you so much, thank you
24 panel.

2 Steven Pacheco, Dipal Shah, Amy Breedlove,
3 Yashkima[SP?] Shaw, Shaneka Fogler, Veronica
4 Echeverri.

5 Panel, please state your name before you start.
6 You can begin.

7 DIPAL SHAH: My name is Dipal Shah. Dear Chair
8 Adams and esteemed members of this Subcommittee. My
9 name is Dipal Shah and I am Director of Strategic
10 Partnerships of the Center for Court Innovation.

11 I testify today on behalf of the Center in
12 support of the city's efforts to close the Rikers
13 Island jail complex.

14 The city's plan represents the culmination of a
15 serious research and development process that should
16 serve as a model for the rest of the nation. It is a
17 major step forward for the city and away from an out
18 loaded approach to correction that isolates New
19 Yorkers in a de facto penal colony. We can and
20 should do better in this in 2019.

21 Since 1996, the Center has dedicated itself to
22 the development of safe and effective alternatives to
23 incarceration. We have been credited with helping
24 thousands of defendants avoid money bail and pretrial
25 detention. The Center also provides research support

2 and expert assistance to hundreds of criminal justice
3 reformers around the world. One such project was our
4 work with the independent commission of New York's
5 Criminal Justice and Incarceration Reform, a.k.a. the
6 Lippman Commission.

7 Since the release of the Commissions report, the
8 Center has been working with city officials, the
9 state court system, prosecutors, defense agencies,
10 community leaders and others to implement the reports
11 data driven recommendations to reduce the use of jail
12 while maintaining public safety.

13 In general, re-endorse a three-pronged approach
14 of reform significantly reducing unnecessary
15 incarceration, closing Rikers and building small
16 humane jails, and developing imaginative public uses
17 for Rikers Island. We hope to make jail a last
18 resort rather than default setting.

19 Local jails will continue to be necessary for
20 just a small fraction of the criminal justice
21 population. We must ensure that these facilities are
22 places where genuine rehabilitation can take place.
23 This is a promise of the city's proposed plan to help
24 the Justice system live up to its commitment to treat
25 every individual with dignity and respect.

2 The City's plan is not perfect, no plan is.
3 There has been vigorous debate about things like cost
4 and congestion and the scale of buildings. Vigorous
5 debate is one of the things we do best here in New
6 York. That's been made clear here today.

7 Community input has made the city's plan better
8 and the community should continue to be involved in
9 every step of the process as the plan proceeds but
10 there can be no debate that we should move forward.

11 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you very much.

12 STEVEN PACHECO: Good afternoon Council Members.
13 My name is Steven Pacheco. I am Bronx Native of 20
14 plus years. Twenty of that I have spent in Vanessa
15 Gibson's District and now I am in Council Member
16 Torres's District. I am sad to see he is not here,
17 but I work for from Punishment to Public Health
18 Department at John Jay College, also known as P2PH.
19 P2PH is a collaboration of academic research, policy
20 and direct service agencies focused on accelerating
21 reforms at the intersections of public health and
22 public safety.

23 We focus on stimulating dialog across disciplines
24 and accelerating the adoption of proven strategies
25 that address the underlying causes of criminal and

2 antisocial behaviors. I have also worked across
3 various sectors, such as policy and philanthropy and
4 I am a formerly incarcerated person and why this
5 issue hits home for me. I think it's a travesty we
6 are having this conversation without the people who
7 are actually incarcerated right now.

8 Today, we are discussing a special moment for our
9 city. The opportunity to shut the horror jail
10 facilities of Rikers Island may not come around again
11 for another 50 years or more. And so, it is with
12 that further that I make my appeal to City Council as
13 we approach the Closing of Rikers. In this moment,
14 elected officials are tasked with finding the
15 equilibrium as highlighted by many of those gathered
16 here to this hearing, almost like 200 plus. We
17 recognize the current plan to construct and redesign
18 four borough-based facilities has flaws, but at this
19 special moment, we also recognize the dangers of
20 letting perfection stand in the way of progress.

21 With this sentiment in mind, I encourage you to
22 consider three essential elements of community
23 wellness; social, emotional and financial as you will
24 seek amendments and improvements to the borough-based
25 plan.

2 How are we investing in the social, emotional and
3 financial wellbeing of the community surrounding the
4 planned borough-based facilities? We encourage City
5 Council to broaden the perspective of the City's plan
6 to close Rikers and P2PH is eager to lend it's
7 wellness framework to help move the city efforts
8 forward.

9 Thank you for your time, have a great evening.

10 SHANEKA FOGLER: Hello, my name is Shaneka
11 Fogler. I am a member of Just Leadership. I was
12 also detained on Rikers Island for 22 months while
13 awaiting trial. This being my only experience with
14 jail, it's one that I will never forget.

15 I can recall the times being in the cell with
16 temperatures over 100 degrees. Correctional officers
17 chose to preserve energy instead of human life. No
18 one should have to endure the conditions of Rikers.
19 We must set a clear plan in place to close Rikers, so
20 I ask you to vote yes, to this plan.

21 But you can also use your power to improve this
22 plan. Tell Mayor de Blasio that along with passing
23 this plan, the city must commit to more investments
24 in alternatives to incarceration and mental health
25 resources.

3 I was housed with women who were clearly battling
4 mental illness but instead of being properly treated,
5 they were mistreated due to their inability and
6 locked in their cells. Some would react by
7 expressing their frustrations by either attacking
8 other women on the unit or spreading feces in the
9 cell areas that the rest of us were exposed to.

10 Yes, they may not have been maintaining their
11 hygiene, but that could have also been because the
12 time was not taken to properly diagnose and treat
13 them accordingly.

14 I also know that these new facilities are just a
15 start and that advocates like me will keep working to
16 make sure the entire management of them is
17 reconstructed with support staff, not Department of
18 Corrections for interaction. Along with that, we
19 need to change the language so that the behavior
20 change will follow. No more inmates or offenders;
21 addressing people mister and misses instead.
22 Transform building and transform culture will reduce
23 recidivism, which Rikers Island will never be able to
24 do.

25 I urge you to use your power as City Council to
end this suffering and support this plan, including

2 the improvements that those of us from the Close
3 Rikers Campaign have named. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you. Can you just
5 restate your name again?

6 SHANEKA FOGLER: Shaneka Fogler, F-o-g-l-e-r.

7 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you so much.

8 SHANEKA FOGLER: You're welcome.

9 YASHKIMA SHAW: Hello, my name is Yashkima Shaw I
10 am from John Jay College of Criminal Justice and my
11 experience is very critical in the sense that I am
12 part of the Rikers Debate team. I usually go twice a
13 week and teach debate skills and do like recreational
14 activities with them. So, to be honest with you, we
15 really need to close Rikers Island. At the same
16 time, we have to consider that we are not going to
17 make the same mistake as present in the Rikers
18 Island. Such as the staff added to the towers of the
19 inmate. It has to be more positive than what is
20 currently now.

21 To be really honest with you, I also want to link
22 Rikers Island [Inaudible 4:34:29] to ACS because
23 like, I did physically tour in Horizon where the
24 staff is so negative that I feel like these guys
25 shouldn't be working with ACS facilities because of

2 that attitude, you know? So, like, there was a guy
3 was a former NYPD cop, who used to work as a metal
4 detector. Who was like, if you want to work with
5 juveniles, you are dealing with animals. You know,
6 like this type of attitude, we shouldn't have in the
7 first place.

8 VERONICA ECHEVERRI: Good afternoon Council. My
9 name is Veronica Echeverri. I am a Social Worker and
10 Career Manager at Getting Out and Staying Out, also
11 known as GOSO.

12 Our mission at GOSO is to empower young men ages
13 16 to 24 years old who have been involved in the
14 criminal justice system to avoid recidivism by
15 reshaping their futures through educational
16 achievement, meaningful employment and financial
17 independence. Our aim is to promote personal,
18 professional and intellectual growth through goal-
19 oriented programming and comprehensive social support
20 services.

21 GOSO has been working at Rikers since 2004 to
22 provide early reentry services to young men,
23 including offering core advocacy, career counseling,
24 mental health services and reentry preparation. We
25 speak not only from the perspective of service

2 providers but also on behalf of our participants.

3 Right now, we work with almost 200 young men who are
4 currently detained in the New York City jails. The
5 hazardous and unclean conditions of Rikers are not
6 only a human rights violation but can affect the
7 physical and mental wellbeing of individuals. These
8 jails are unsafe for anyone, officers, civilian or
9 detained person.

10 Additionally, these jails, as they historically
11 have been structured, do not have rehabilitation in
12 mind. Though more programs and opportunities have
13 been offered by DOC in recent years, many people in
14 NYC jails do not have equal access to school, work
15 and programs. For these reasons, GOSO asks you to
16 vote yes on the city's plan to replace Rikers with
17 smaller borough-based facilities. It is imperative
18 that people who become incarcerated remain connected
19 to families, friends and community members as well as
20 program opportunities. People, regardless of justice
21 status, do better when they have ample support behind
22 them as they work towards their goals.

23 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you very much. Thank
24 you, panel, I appreciate your time today. Thank you.

2 Rose Asaf, Scott Jacobs, Sandy Oherin, Lucas
3 Chung, Sandy Redburn, not here okay, Sandy is not
4 here, Dan Swartz?

5 Okay, we will do it one more time. Rose Asaf,
6 representing Code Pink. Oh, good. Scott Jacobs,
7 Sandy Oherin[SP?], Lucas Chung and Dan Swartz, Lynn
8 Ellsworth, Anthony Dickson, Andrew Hall, Mike
9 Juvinaldo, sorry it's Mello or Milo, I am sorry.

10 Alright, we're going to call them all one more
11 time. Milo Juvinaldo, Andrew Hall, Anthony Dickson,
12 Lyn Ellsworth, Rose Asaf, Scott Jacob, Sandy Oherin,
13 Lucas Chung, Dan Swartz, Michael Dunn, Sasha Kamara,
14 Tom Burns.

15 Okay, we're going to go with the three of you
16 panel. Thank you so much for your patience. Four is
17 coming.

18 Okay, if we have four, we're going to call
19 another name Sharad Coley. Sharad? Evan Wolkowski,
20 Nora Benevenevus[SP?], Chris Casey.

21 Okay panel let's go ahead and roll. Please state
22 your name. Thank you.

23 ROSE ASAF: Hi, my name is Rose Asaf and I would
24 like to start by saying that this hearing is farce.
25 I see you all on your phones. Are you listening to

2 the people talking in front of you? In the one
3 chance that they get to give input, you are on your
4 phones and that's highly upsetting and disrespectful
5 to the one chance people get to give community input.
6 This is not a community plan.

7 And secondly, you are holding New York City
8 hostage by saying that the idea, that the only way to
9 close Rikers is to build four new jails. That's a
10 lie, you can close Rikers and build no new jails.
11 You are not decarcerating by building more jails.
12 You are not planning a future of prison abolition by
13 building more cages to put people in. And as people
14 said before today, there is no such thing as a humane
15 cage. There are \$11 billion, probably more, because
16 this plan is highly unplanned, so it will probably
17 take more money to build these cages than you think
18 it will. \$11 billion that could go into community
19 funds, that could go into education. NYCHA is about
20 to be sold off and privatized and you are talking
21 about building new jails.

22 So, I am just really disappointed. Thank you.

23 DAN SWARTZ: Steve Rory, nice to see you again.
24 Thanks for staying. My name is Dan Swartz, I am here
25 with No New Jails and I Walk NYC.

2 There is no denying the horrific and pervasive
3 violence against people caged on Rikers and the
4 structural oppression that many who are released face
5 over a lifetime, but I wish I could say that we are
6 all here today because we see this as an emergency.

7 If Mayor de Blasio, MACJ, the Lippman Commission
8 and the CPC actually thought of it as an emergency,
9 they would make a binding commitment to close it,
10 regardless of any other factors.

11 Instead, they are seeking opportunities. Does
12 City Council care about the difference? As our
13 elected representatives, you have a duty to listen to
14 everyone, not just gigantic law firms, not just
15 cooperate architects profiting off of confinement,
16 not just a police force that is addicted to
17 destroying lives. Not just a commission who should
18 have recused himself from Tuesdays vote.

19 Tyler Nims has expressed a desire to see our city
20 reach a point where jails are no longer necessary.
21 But if cops and prosecutors find that they have
22 unchecked power and bed capacity to jail people, they
23 will do so to the maximum. Even as the city's
24 incarcerated population plummets, even as the reasons
25 for incarcerating people to begin with are

2 continually exposed as reinforcements of inequity and
3 trauma, the kind that lead to crime. Anything else
4 is an authoritarian lie.

5 Look no further than the NYPD's recent fare of
6 Asian Campaign. How would building design fix that
7 utterly racist attempt to criminalize poverty. All
8 these site services MOCJ listed, why place them in
9 jails before placing them in communities to the
10 fullest humane extent. How do Jonathan Lippman or
11 Dana Kaplan have any control over whether Wardens or
12 CO's use the secrecy of their structure to torture
13 people as they do everyday across the state? Why
14 won't you end pretrial detention? This is not harm
15 reduction; this is harm reproduction.

16 By approving this plan, you are telling every
17 incarcerated person that they deserved it. It just
18 should have been a little sunnier. What Tyler
19 described is a hostage situation. Do what we say, or
20 we keep torturing the people on Rikers. Some
21 emergency.

22 The city has \$11 billion to spend, spend it where
23 it counts. Thank you.

24 MILO JUVINELLO: My name is Milo Juvinaldo and I
25 am a student and an organizer with No New Jails NYC.

2 I was born and raised in New York. I support the
3 immediate closure of Rikers Island without building a
4 single new jail in New York City. In this vision, I
5 am guided by the analysis of among others, currently
6 incarcerated organizers with No New Jails who oppose
7 the city's violent, oppressive and racist jail
8 expansion plan.

9 Today, I am going to read the testimonial of
10 Osha, and incarcerated organizer with No New Jails
11 who opposes the jail construction plan.

12 Osha is a Black transgender woman currently
13 incarcerated in a men's prison in upstate New York.

14 My incarceration on Rikers was not a nice one
15 being placed with men. In upstate prison, it's hell.
16 I am sitting in and SHU box and I am having a hard
17 time getting my undergarments. It's also hard to
18 receive and get medical attention. I am waiting to
19 see the dentist. They have one in this this person,
20 like really just one.

21 Reporting things such as sexual abuse or sexual
22 anything is bullshit. I thought I was supposed to
23 learn things in prison, but the only thing I have
24 learned is CO officers are the true criminals and
25 these counselors can't treat shit because they

2 themselves don't know shit. To shut down Rikers
3 without building new jails, the city should spend
4 it's \$11 billion on programs that actually work to
5 keep people out of cages. Let's not waste \$11
6 billion on jails that will only have poor people,
7 transgender people, Black people and Puerto Rican
8 people. Jails do not help people; they do not teach
9 people anything but to hate and be more corrupted
10 like those officers who work in the jails now.

11 Let's use that \$11 billion for something
12 wonderful and meaningful, like affordable housing for
13 LGBTQ people and women who are being abused by their
14 husbands. How about using that money to help people
15 who are living with HIV? That money could be used to
16 run good after school programs where young prince's
17 and princesses can better themselves.

18 Why not use that money for better assistance for
19 those who are coming out of jail or prison? Use that
20 money for mental health programs for all minorities,
21 for better programs in schools, to get all homeless
22 people off the streets and build safe and affordable
23 and warm homes.

24 You all want to make America great; this is how
25 you start. Building new jails and putting LGBT

2 Black, Mexican, and Puerto Rican communities in them,
3 does not at all make America great.

4 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you.

5 MILO JUVINELLO: In fact, it shows how ignorant
6 America is.

7 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you.

8 MILO JUVINELLO: Let's be smart and use that \$11
9 billion to help our people, not destroy our people.

10 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thanks very much.

11 MICHAEL DUNN: Hello, my name is Michael Dunn, I
12 live in Brooklyn and Mr. Lander is my elected
13 official. I am a licensed master's Social Worker in
14 the State of New York and have a certificate in
15 public health administration and policy from the
16 University of Chicago School of Social Service
17 Administration.

18 I strongly oppose the construction of these four
19 new jails, and I am actually joined in this by the
20 American Medical Association, which identified mass
21 incarceration as a public health crisis. In
22 particular, in contributing the mental health crisis
23 in the spread of preventable infection, such as
24 hepatitis C. And in the awful regular routine and
25 sanctions, sexual violence that people are forced to

2 suffer at the hands of our carceral state. I am
3 going to quote from Angela Davis in the book; Why are
4 Prisons Obsolete? This is the 1996 humans rights
5 watch about sexual abusive women in US prisons.

6 Our findings indicate that being a woman prisoner
7 in US State prisons can be a terrifying experience.
8 If you are sexually abused, you cannot escape from
9 your abuser. Grievance or investigatory procedures,
10 where they exist, are often ineffectual and
11 correctional employees continue to engage in abuse,
12 because they believe they will rarely be held
13 accountable administratively or criminally.

14 Few people outside of prison walls know what is
15 going on or care if they do. Fewer still, do
16 anything to address the problem. You are in a
17 position to address this problem and you are going to
18 choose because you are cowards to build four new
19 jails and I invite you; I invite you to do better and
20 imagine a world without prisons.

21 In the last 15 seconds of my time, I dedicate
22 this silence to Layleen Polanco who died on Rikers
23 Island.

24 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you.

2 Darlene Jackson, Melissa Iachan or Ikin; New York
3 Lawyers for the Public Interest. Melissa?

4 MELISSA IACHAN: I'm here.

5 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Okay. Nigel Quiroz, Peggy
6 Harara[SP?] and Tracie Gardner.

7 Panel, please remember to state your name before
8 you begin. You can start.

9 DARLENE JACKSON: Okay, my name is Darlene
10 Jackson. I am a project coordinator with the Women's
11 Criminal Justice Association, the Beyond Rosie's 2020
12 Campaign and a supporter of the Close Rikers
13 Campaign.

14 I support the ULURP application to close Rikers
15 Island with the conditions that included key
16 recommendations by people, families, and communities
17 directly impacted by Rikers and diverse from \$8
18 billion that the city spends on law enforcement and
19 invest in people in communities that is equity driven
20 and address it to root causes of incarceration.
21 Also, decarcerates from 15,000 detained to less than
22 3,000 people from twelve city jails to four and close
23 Rikers Island by 2024.

24

25

2 The Beyond Rosie's Campaign is an effort to
3 amplify the voices and experiences and needs of women
4 that have historically been overlooked.

5 When it comes to incarceration, we work
6 specifically - sorry, to expand alternatives to pre
7 detention, incarceration, programming to reduce the
8 number of women at Rosie's below 100 and to close the
9 Rose M. Singer by 2020 and support a reopening of a
10 new center centralized secured service [inaudible
11 19:28] facility, specifically in Manhattan for any
12 woman who identify as a woman. And also, to reinvest
13 the savings from closing Rikers to better serve
14 women, families and their communities.

15 I also want to indicate that I know that - I want
16 to thank MOCJ for listening for women who are
17 currently attained on Rosie's and formerly
18 incarcerated and in a proposal to have them sited in
19 the four proposed facilities and now housed in the
20 Queens site. I would ask the city to consider to
21 further reduce the population to 100, because without
22 decarceration efforts, we believe that it could be
23 housed on a 100 instead of 200 that's being proposed
24 by MOCJ. And also, to consider a sustainable
25

3 facility outside this ULURP application at some
4 point.

5 But I do want to say that Rikers Island is a
6 public health crisis. It is an environment to health
7 crisis. People that are detained there are mothers
8 of children, homelessness, drug addiction, and so,
9 the city needs to really address you know, the root
10 causes of incarceration and they have the opportunity
11 to do that right now. Thank you.

12 MELISSA IACHAN: Good evening, my name is Melissa
13 Iachan and I am a Senior Staff Attorney in the
14 Environmental Justice Program at New York Lawyers for
15 the Public Interest.

16 Nobody works with communities across the New York
17 City area to combat inequality, injustice, and
18 infringements of civil rights. Our environmental
19 justice program has advocated to end the inequitable
20 distribution of environmental burdens in our city for
21 over two decades.

22 Nobody is a partner in the Close Rikers
23 Coalition, due to our strong belief that the decrepit
24 facility is built on a deteriorating landfill, pose
25 serious health hazards to all detainees and employees
on Rikers Island.

2 We demand the city shutter the corrections
3 facility and explore the possibilities to use the
4 space on Rikers Island for renewable energy. We urge
5 the Council to approve the ULURP before it to
6 facilitate this.

7 Nobody spent more than two years collecting
8 documents from various city agencies regarding the
9 environmental conditions at Rikers and detainee
10 health conditions.

11 Our survey's show that the environmental
12 conditions at Rikers Correctional Facility pose a
13 direct threat to human health and wellbeing. In
14 particular, the plumbing is so dysfunctional, the
15 facility is systematically failed to provide clean
16 running water and properly working sewage systems.
17 Contributing to conditions that exacerbate a number
18 of illnesses and health challenges for detainees.

19 The picture that these documents paint,
20 illustrates the urgency to close the Island as soon
21 as possible. For this reason, nobody supports this
22 consolidated ULURP process and urges the Council to
23 vote yes in moving forward with the borough-based
24 jails system and community facilities while also
25 ensuring that the new buildings are sound, designed

2 in physical and mental wellness in mind, sited
3 equitably and include key improvements that I have
4 detailed further in my written testimony.

5 We look forward to continuing our work with the
6 Close Rikers Coalition, City Council, the Renewable
7 Rikers Coalition and the Administration to ensure
8 that Rikers is closed as quickly and as soon as
9 possible and that the detainee population continues
10 to decrease. While investments are made not only in
11 communities but in transforming the blight of Rikers
12 Island to a source of renewable energy for our
13 future, the only thing that this toxic Island should
14 ever be used for at all. Thank you.

15 NIGEL QUIROZ: Good evening. My name is Nigel
16 Quiroz and I am a Policy Analyst and Attorney at the
17 Innocence Project.

18 The Innocence Project is a national organization
19 that works to exonerate the wrongfully convicted and
20 reformed criminal justice system to prevent future
21 injustice.

22 As a member of the campaign to Close Rikers, the
23 Innocence Project is deeply grateful that the City
24 Council has recognized the overall negative effects

2 that Rikers has had on the people of New York City
3 and disproportionately people of color.

4 The innocence project hopes that this process
5 will mitigate the abuses and tribulations of those
6 people held at Rikers who are presumed innocent
7 including some awaiting trial for years. With the
8 anticipated dramatic decrease of pretrial detention
9 in New York City, we hope to see fewer people
10 pleading guilty to crimes they did not commit just to
11 avoid time in jail.

12 The nations more than 360 DNA based exonerations
13 demonstrate the problem. More than 10 percent of
14 them proven innocent through post-conviction DNA
15 testing had originally pled guilty to serious violent
16 offenses. When you consider the number of people who
17 plead out when the charges and stakes are lower, we
18 believe an enormous number of innocent people plead
19 to lower level felonies and misdemeanors.

20 There is much work to be done between this
21 commitment by the city in full implementation. The
22 IP is urging the City Council to vote yes on the plan
23 to shrink the jail population and build borough-based
24 facilities to enable the closure of Rikers and to
25 negotiate important improvements to the plan,

2 including commitments to investment and community
3 resources.

4 Those individuals that are housed at Rikers, many
5 of whom are presumed innocent are subjected to
6 terrible conditions, isolated from legal
7 representation in support of family and loved ones
8 and access to courts. They are often shuttled on
9 long back and forth court dates, housing horrible
10 conditions and subjected to violence at the others of
11 being housed and even correctional officers
12 themselves.

13 These issues can be remedied by the construction
14 of new, more centrally located borough-based
15 facilities with more program space and more
16 humanizing design. Thank you.

17 PEGGY HARARA: Hi, my name Peggy Harara. I am a
18 lifelong New York City resident and a mother, and a
19 grandmother not only to my own but to the many young
20 people I work with. They are young men with lots of
21 potential but also with lots of trauma, pain,
22 [INAUDIBLE 27:58].

23 My 20-year old son also lives with me -

24 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Sorry Ma'am, your
25 microphone is not on.

2 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Check your microphone.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: There you go.

4 PEGGY HARARA: At first, I didn't know where he
5 was, I didn't hear from him for three days. When I
6 finally found out where he was at, I made my way to
7 the Rikers Island barge in the Bronx.

8 He told me he was in the boat pens for three
9 nights on the floor with roaches climbing on him and
10 he still didn't bathe.

11 No phone call, no bed, no bath. The jail
12 population in New York City is the lowest it's been
13 in 40 years, so there are no shortages of beds or
14 staff in those facilities to explain such inhumane
15 treatment.

16 We must do better, the fact that Rikers and the
17 boat are so isolated makes it easier for this abuse
18 to happen with little oversight. Closing Rikers is
19 urgent. The planned proposed is a start but we urge
20 the City Council to make important modifications to
21 improve it.

22 The City Council can insist that the city make a
23 targeted \$30 million investment in expanding
24 alternatives to incarceration. The type of programs
25 focused on a therapeutic approach that would really

2 benefit my son. Insist that a city agree to a \$100
3 million investment in mental health resources.

4 Through these commitments reduce the jail
5 population to less than 3,000 people in the next five
6 years and these new facilities must be operated
7 differently. People must be treated as people and
8 the city must detail plans to limit the role and the
9 power of the Department of Corrections, so that these
10 facilities can actually support rehabilitation.

11 Please, help us to win improvements to this plan
12 and to close the United States last penal colony and
13 the floating jail here in the Bronx, where people are
14 suffering right now. Thank you.

15 TRACIE GARDNER: Hi, I am Tracie Gardner, I am
16 with the Legal Action Center and I am here on behalf
17 of the New York City ATI and Reentry Coalition and
18 it's eleven members.

19 We are pleased to make this statement and support
20 of the Administration's plan to close Rikers. I am
21 going to use my time to name the organizations, Bronx
22 Connect Cases; College and Community Fellowship; The
23 Center for Employment Opportunities; Center of
24 Community Alternatives; EAC Network; Fortune Society;
25 Greenburger

2 Center for Social and Criminal Justice; Legal
3 Action Center; Osborne Association and Women's Prison
4 Association. These groups have been working together
5 for about 30 years in different configurations but
6 started initially with funding from the State
7 Assembly and then more recently gets funding from the
8 city and the City Council and I want to especially
9 acknowledge Council Member Dromm, Powers and Gibson
10 for being such champions of this work.

11 Our programs provide an array of services that do
12 not lend themselves to one fixed or uniform cost
13 figure, but I can confidently say that almost all of
14 our services are vastly less expensive than
15 incarceration and these services can include housing,
16 other noncriminal justice support services such as
17 mental health, addiction services that are responsive
18 to individual needs.

19 We are here to support the development of
20 borough-based jails, it's the only logical way to
21 close Rikers. We were mentioned in the Lippman
22 Commission that the only way to do so was to expand
23 ATI and Reentry and a recently enacted reforms, as
24 people have mentioned really emphasize the need.

2 We have long believed that a strong ATI and
3 Reentry system would enable less reliance on
4 corrections. We did a blueprint about this and I am
5 going to conclude, we are specially concerned that as
6 jail population has shrunk, those that remain have
7 serious and complex needs, like serious mental
8 illness and addiction. It is unacceptable that the
9 city jail system is a critical component of the
10 city's healthcare system.

11 Okay, but that is the reality that currently
12 exists.

13 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you Ms. Gardner. Thank
14 you, times up. Thank you so much. Thank you, panel.

15 Christina from Survived and Punished New York,
16 Trisha Lynch, Nursat Seba[SP?], I believe she
17 testified. Anna Goldstein, Nasser Brianne[SP?],
18 Whonon Daz[SP?] from DRUM, Naga Guyette, Maxwell
19 Quire[SP?], Kiva Carmen Frank, Chi or Chi Loek C-h-I
20 L-o-e-k, Winston, is Winston here?

21 Okay panel, please remember to state your name.
22 You may begin.

23 ERIC GOLDSTEIN: Good afternoon, my name is Eric
24 Goldstein and I am the New York City Environment
25 Director at the Natural Resources Defense Council.

2 We are a national environmental organization based
3 here in New York City. We are pleased to be here
4 today to support the closure of Rikers Island jails
5 and the conversion of this Island into what we
6 believe could be a national model for environmental
7 sustainability.

8 The closure of Rikers presents a once in a
9 lifetime opportunity to convert an Island of shame
10 into a show piece of green development.

11 While Rikers is completely unsuitable for
12 residential development, we see at least three
13 potentially transformative land uses. The first is
14 using a portion of the islands acreage for green
15 energy. The Island could provide space for a giant
16 solar array and energy storage facility that could
17 provide New Yorkers with clean and reliable energy in
18 perpetuity.

19 Such energy plans could allow for the closure of
20 older fossil fuel Peaker Power Plants, currently
21 located in densely populated city neighborhoods and
22 whose admissions pose localized air quality problems
23 especially for residents suffering from asthma and
24 other preexisting lung diseases.

2 A second smart land use would be the creation of
3 a modern facility that could convert city generated
4 food waste and yard waste into valuable compost.
5 Such an operation would prevent such wastes from
6 being buried in landfills where they become major
7 sources of global warming methane admissions and in
8 city composting operation would save city taxpayers
9 ten of millions of dollars that would otherwise be
10 spent shipping food waste and yard waste to distant
11 landfills and incinerators.

12 The third piece of the new vision of
13 sustainability would be to construct a state-of-the-
14 art sewage plant on the island. Four existing city
15 sewage plants closest to Rikers Island are nearly 80
16 years old as they approach the end of their useful
17 life, they will require expensive upgrades.
18 Constructing a consolidated new plan on the island
19 could allow the city to shutdown one or more of these
20 older facilities freeing up the lands where they are
21 now located for community desired recreation and
22 other land uses.

23 Finally, we propose that as part of the
24 transition, the City Council renamed –

2 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Mr. Goldstein, we have to
3 stop you. You have been stopped by the clock.

4 ERIC GOLDSTEIN: Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Do we have an appearance card
6 for you?

7 ERIC GOLDSTEIN: Yes.

8 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: We do, okay. We will have to
9 find it. I believe we called Anna Goldstein and you
10 are Eric Goldstein.

11 ERIC GOLDSTEIN: Apologies.

12 KIVA CARMEN FRANK: Kiva, I support the immediate
13 closure of Rikers Island without building a single
14 jail in New York City.

15 In this vision, I am guided by the analysis of
16 incarcerated organizers with no new jails who oppose
17 the city's violent oppressive and racist jail
18 expansion plan. In our developing our vision for
19 what accountability for harm looks like outside of
20 jails and prisons.

21 Today, I would like to read a testimonial of
22 Pamela, who is serving a life sentence at Bedford
23 Hills. Pamela says, I am kind, humble and worthy of
24 being free. A New York City without jails would be
25 peaceful and united.

3 To me, safety means not having to worry about
4 basic needs being met, opportunities being closed, or
5 having to be concerned about being victimized. It
6 feels peaceful and worry free.

7 Transformative ways we could deal with harm that
8 might include therapeutic groups, having victims meet
9 with their offenders under supervisions so that they
10 can voice the harm that was done to them and allowing
11 offenders to apologize or explain what led to their
12 behavior.

13 It also might look like giving back to
14 communities and providing people who have caused harm
15 or been incarcerated with the educational and
16 vocational training, so that they have something to
17 build towards. Unfortunately, our prisons are
18 schools on crime, don't really rehabilitate people
19 and often leave them feeling more angry, despondent
20 and hopeless than when they got there.

21 It's sad but true and I am speaking from the
22 experience of watching others over almost three
23 decades of incarceration. The number one thing I
24 have seen that really changes people is education.
25 It opens a whole new world of possibilities and helps

3 people mature enough to own their own responsibility
4 in the harm they caused.

5 And that was Pamela, an organizer from No New
6 Jails, who supports the closing of Rikers without any
7 new jails in New York City.

8 NASSER BREANNE: Good evening everyone. My name
9 is Nasser Breanne and I am undocumented immigrant
10 from Queens.

11 When I first came to New York, I was told that
12 this was a sanctuary city. A city that welcomed
13 immigrants and took care of its residents.

14 So, when I heard about this proposal to spend \$11
15 billion to build for new jails, I could not believe
16 it. This goes against everything a sanctuary city
17 should be. A sanctuary city should be investing in
18 its people, not in building jails to lock people up.
19 I am sure that many of the Council Members here today
20 would strongly comment what the Trump Administration
21 is doing nationally. But how are you any different
22 then Trump?

23 When you ask for billions to build jails to lock
24 up Black and Brown people and Trump calls for
25 billions to build more cages to lock up Black and
Brown immigrants. Thank you.

2 MURPHY AUSTIN: Hi, my name is Murphy Austin, I
3 am reading the statement on behalf of Naga Guyette
4 who was here earlier but was forced to be removed
5 from the hearing when they expressed themselves
6 earlier in the afternoon.

7 Naga wanted me to say, I support the immediate
8 closure of Rikers Island without building new jails.
9 In this vision, I am guided by contemporary and
10 historic abolitionist movements including currently
11 incarcerated leaders who are building a vision for
12 New York City without Rikers.

13 And Naga wanted me to share the testimony of
14 Hakeem, an incarcerated organizer with the No New
15 Jails Campaign. Hakeem said, how would I spend \$11
16 billion to shutdown Rikers instead of building new
17 jails. The first thing I would focus my spending on
18 is poverty. I would create community gardens, so
19 that people can learn how to cultivate the land and
20 grow their own food in harmony. I would create food
21 banks and shelters.

22 We should invest the money currently spent on
23 trapping the masses, on giving shelter, food and
24 clothing to the masses instead. Then I would focus
25 on education, real education that would help the

2 masses overcome obstacles and learn their true
3 history and purpose. I would spend the money on
4 medical resources including holistic mental and
5 physical healthcare. But ultimately, I would spend
6 the money on programs that actually get at the root
7 causes of negative action and help prevent harm or
8 violence.

9 As communities, we must build these programs so
10 that our people can see that we don't need jails.
11 What is obvious is that the prison industrial complex
12 is big business for capitalism and generations of
13 incarceration including future generations are the
14 perpetuation of chattel slavery.

15 We are a country that thrives off of blood, sweat
16 and tears of the masses. The judicial systems
17 justice is not prescribed for the poor or for
18 minorities. The judicial system keeps the rich
19 getting richer and the poor getting poorer by keeping
20 us at the bottom as workers within the prison
21 industrial complex. A system that places the masses
22 in slavery and calls this correction is a corrupt,
23 hypocritical system.

24 The reality is that the only correction the
25 prison provides is adding money to the capitalists

3 pockets. How shall integrity face oppression, \$11
4 billion in the hands of community. Let's get free.
5 No new jails.

6 CHI LOEK: My name is Chi Loek, I speak now of
7 the nonprofits that I serve empowering civic
8 engagement advancing for the wellbeing of Asian
9 Pacific Americans, as well as bridging the digital
10 divide in the poor communities and better mental
11 health services for people.

12 Main Chinatown is the pride, heart and soul of
13 Asian people, as well as all of the people who work,
14 lives and enjoy visiting there. Chinatown does not
15 need another new mega jail. We have carried three
16 jails for decades.

17 In the early 1980's, I was fortunate to work as a
18 youth counselor for a major nonprofit, helping the
19 recently resettled Asian refugees from Cambodia and
20 Vietnam living near the parade grounds of Flatbush
21 Brooklyn.

22 At the time, crime was rampant, many of the
23 immigrants and refugees were helpless as they come
24 home from a days hard work in the middle of the night
25 just to have their wages robbed and physically
26 harmed.

2 Months and years will pass, without much
3 assistance from the police. Once the New York Times
4 exposed and applied there was a system to help them.
5 Unfortunately, those days are over. Crime rates are
6 the lowest in decades. So, my question, why are we
7 building massive and tallest detention centers in
8 Chinatown or any other in the four boroughs?

9 The community does not need new detention centers
10 to further suppressing the people in the community.
11 What we need is more funding for support for our
12 children to improve their education, so that they can
13 compete in the ever-changing technology world.

14 What we need is more funding for scales training
15 programs, so people will have what's necessary to
16 acquire jobs and making a living rather than resort
17 to other illegal means of support. What we need is
18 more funding for community-based healthcare centers
19 to support mental health services to those that's
20 really needed.

21 All we need is more affordable housing for
22 working poor, to stop the ever-increasing ray of
23 homelessness. We need senior housing, culture
24 center, nonprofits and the support of the small
25 businesses to grow and thrive.

2 And the list goes on. I have serious concern
3 about Council Members.

4 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you.

5 CHI LOEK: So, this is a haze process.

6 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you. Thank you very
7 much for your testimony.

8 CHI LOEK: Vote no new jails. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you. Thank you, panel.
10 Oh, sorry, one more.

11 UNIDENTIFIED: We switched.

12 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Okay, go right ahead.

13 WINSTON WINN: So, hi, my name is Winston Winn.
14 I was incarcerated on Rikers Island for four months
15 this past winter at OBCC Otis Bantum.

16 I don't get to say this very often, but I agree
17 with Commissioner Brann that all the jails on Rikers
18 Island should be closed.

19 I just want to give a few specifics to maybe
20 highlight some of the things that she said. I think
21 Dana actually mentioned the difficulty in
22 transportation with court. It is a nuisance, right,
23 we have to wake up at four, but that's not the only
24 thing. I just went yesterday to appear for a friend
25 of mine's bail hearing. He was there, they produced

2 him, but somewhere in that mix up, they didn't think
3 he was there, so he didn't end up being called up.

4 This happens on a regular basis. People are produced
5 in correctly; I was produced incorrectly twice. What
6 that means is the person who should have been there
7 for their case to be called, was not there. So, they
8 end up having to wait another two months for whatever
9 decision may have happened. This happens regularly.

10 So, that transportation from Rikers isn't just an
11 inconvenience, it means two months more that you may
12 not get to see your family when your case could have
13 been settled. Right, someone else mentioned, I think
14 Member Rosenthal had mentioned the healthcare issues.
15 The huge difference being on Rikers is, it's not just
16 that you are out on an island, those buildings are
17 separated from each other. So, while I was there, if
18 I wanted to get physical therapy, it didn't just mean
19 going down to the clinic. It meant going down,
20 sitting at an intake for four hours, waiting for a
21 bus to take me to NIC, which is only like a five-
22 minute walk. But hen, doing two minutes and then
23 coming back and then waiting in intake again. It
24 takes a whole day, and no one is going to do that.

2 And last, I think Member Levin and Salamanca, I
3 think you both mentioned the air conditioning. The
4 procedure there right now, is you get a cup of ice
5 during lunch and at dinner.

6 There is no ventilation right, there is a lot of
7 plexiglass, the windows are meant to not open, so the
8 summers are not getting any cooler and in my sixteen
9 seconds left, I just want to say I mean, for all
10 those reasons and many more, I would happily speak on
11 them, but Rikers should be closed now. Not any time
12 later than now. That's it.

13 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you panel. I
14 appreciate your passion and your time.

15 Insharac Mann[SP?], is it Sy Eda[SP?], Cide
16 Valez[SP?], I want to say Michael Verde, representing
17 Cattell Center. Michael Verde, Verde, April
18 Denoska[SP?] from the Fortune Society, Jose
19 Mockda[SP?] from Bronx Connect, Daniel Rosario from
20 the Fortune Society, John Jiler.

21 Panel, please remember to state your name. You
22 may begin.

23 INSHARACK MANN: Good afternoon, I am Insharac
24 Mann from the Vera Institute of Justice. I am a
25 former public defender; a researcher and I am a long

2 time New Yorker. And over the years, I have visited
3 loved ones and people I have represented at the jails
4 at Rikers Island, at the boat, at the Tombs, at the
5 Brooklyn House of detention.

6 I've seen firsthand the violence and danger
7 within those walls, and we can't in conscious condone
8 the existence of facilities like these that don't
9 provide safety for the people incarcerated there. We
10 must close each and every one of them without further
11 delay.

12 But here's the thing, for now, they must be
13 replaced with safer and better jails in our
14 communities. And I will say this, voting yes on
15 closing Rikers and building new borough-based jails
16 is not at odds with striving for a day when jails
17 become obsolete. I truly believe that.

18 As a city we've already come further than we
19 could have ever imagined in delivering public safety
20 by using incarceration less. And we can, we must, go
21 even further and here's how. First of all, invest in
22 the services and resources that build our
23 communities. It will cost \$260 million a year to
24 provide housing, education and supportive services.
25 That's a number that the Lippman Commission put

2 together to determine how much would it cost to
3 properly invest in the alternatives we need, so that
4 incarceration is not the default.

5 And before we spend \$8.7 billion to close Rikers
6 and build new jails, commit to spending a fraction of
7 that amount on the resources that help people thrive.

8 Second, set the bar high for how low we can go in
9 the use of incarceration. There are 700,000 people
10 in jail today. The new bail laws that go into effect
11 in January 2020, will get us to under 5,000. Parole
12 reform will land us closer to 4,000. By arresting
13 less, expanding diversion, investing in pretrial
14 services, and providing more effective alternatives
15 to incarceration, we can reach an average daily jail
16 population of less than 3,500. I believe we can even
17 go less than that.

18 As we build new jails, think to the future in a
19 day when we won't need them. Build these new jails
20 in a way that allows for flexible and evolving use.
21 As future community centers, libraries, grocery
22 stores design the spaces that we would proud and
23 eager to repurpose for another use.

24 The closing of Rikers used to seem like a pipe
25 dream and today, it's entirely within reach. We urge

2 you to do it now and to push further for a day where
3 we don't need Rikers and we don't need any other
4 jails but for today, vote yes to close Rikers.

5 SY EDA: My name is Sy Eda and I am an organizer
6 with No New Jails. I support the immediate closure
7 of Rikers Island without building a single new jail
8 in New York City.

9 Today, I would like to share a testimony of
10 Paris, a gender nonconforming person currently
11 incarcerated in upstate men's prison. I wanted to
12 read this letter to make sure that Paris and people
13 like them are not only represented today but they are
14 really heard.

15 The city has tried its best to keep this plan a
16 secret. The Mayor's Office has had several closed
17 doors meetings about the plan, the city has heard
18 along processes, avoided truly answered questions and
19 implemented the ULURP on this plan in an unfounded
20 way. Communities are not happy about this,
21 incarcerated folks directly impacted are not happy
22 about this, Paris is not happy about this.

23 They state, I was initially in Manhattan Tombs.
24 It was dehumanizing, it was filthy. I remember
25 having to strip naked during intake to be made to

2 take a shower without shower shoes. I never felt so
3 degraded in my life, but humanity was shown to me by
4 murder suspects and robbery suspects was humbling.
5 They knew that I was a newbie and they see more in me
6 than the legal system would fail to see in the years
7 it took for my trial to begin.

8 They knew I did not belong in jail, but I would
9 likely fail to ever prove it because being Black, a
10 feminine import, I was guilty of something just for
11 being who I was.

12 I learned quickly that remaining true to my core
13 values would be the only way to navigate the many
14 pitfalls. I still strive to show who I am in hopes
15 to help others be comfortable with who they were
16 meant to be.

17 Instead of spending billions on jails, the city
18 shutdown Rikers and spend the money on housing,
19 housing, housing. Who can do anything without
20 knowing where they will be able to rest to take care
21 of themselves, to have a safe place, clean place to
22 think, to be free to come and go without any
23 conditions?

24 One of the other issues that should be addressed
25 is the reunification of all the men in some ways back

2 to their communities. There is no way to know the
3 effects of so many long sentences on families who are
4 left in the world.

5 I know I am for certain that jails and prisons do
6 not deter crime. Prison is not meant to correct
7 anything. The main function is housed by these while
8 their minds further deteriorate.

9 CIDE VALEZ: Hi, name is [INAUDIBLE 1:06:00].

10 So, first of all, I don't want to sit here and act
11 like.

12 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Can you state your name
13 please for us?

14 CIDE VALEZ: My name is Cide C-I-D-E. The point
15 of jail is for rehabilitation and the jails that you
16 all got is not rehabilitation, that's income. You
17 all are making money and you all know that.

18 So, that's first of all. You all get all these
19 taxes and you all get these little like what like
20 \$0.20 cent soaps, \$0.20 cent blankets, but then how
21 much you all spend on those bars. You understand
22 what I am saying? That's not cool.

23 I did five years upstate, I was in Hyland, I am
24 19 years old for a robbery that I didn't even
25 commit. You know what I am saying, in the Bronx.

2 So, that's not even fair and like, you know a lot of
3 people say when they look at me and they see I got
4 tattoos on my face, they think I am not really
5 educated, and they don't understand. Like, one time
6 I got bit by a dog and the owner told me that it's a
7 product of this environment. But then another time
8 somebody told me oh, you don't like cops, don't break
9 the law. You don't want to go to jail, don't break
10 the law.

11 But what they don't understand is I am also a
12 product of my environment. You understand what I am
13 saying? That's from like lack of opportunities in my
14 community. I can't really go out there and get a job
15 like that, especially with what I got on my record.
16 I have three felonies on my record, you know what I'm
17 saying? I can't get a job; I can't really do things
18 I want to do. There is no like, a lot of
19 recreational centers in my community. Everything is
20 all abandoned.

21 You all want to put so much money into jail, why
22 don't you all put money into avoiding people going to
23 jail, you understand what I'm saying? Give people
24 opportunities in the community. You all don't want
25 to see people doing good, because you all want people

2 to keep going to jail. Let's not sit here and act
3 like you know, like we don't know what's going on
4 here. We all know that you all want people to go to
5 jail and keep opportunities to a minimum. You know
6 what I am saying because I am not going to sit here
7 and act like you know, we're all on the page. You
8 all are listening to us, but you all don't really
9 care about what we got to say. You all are going to
10 do what you all want to regardless.

11 And even if you all open new jails, you're not
12 really going to put in the proper necessities that
13 people need, because you all don't care. Thank you.

14 APRIL DENOSKA: My name is April Denoska and I am
15 here with here with the Fortune Society.

16 I'd like to use my time and I just want to say
17 thank you to everyone who is here.

18 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: I am sorry, can you just
19 repeat your name one more time, because we had a
20 little noise back there. Can you repeat your name.

21 APRIL DENOSKA: Okay, I am going to start over.
22 Thank you, guys for coming, pleasure to be here. So,
23 my name is April Denoska. I am here with the Fortune
24 Society, pardon my voice.

2 I will use my time to finish Daniel White's prior
3 testimony.

4 I've seen how the current punitive methodology
5 traumatizes students, distracting from a persons
6 ability to feel safe. Hindering one's ability to
7 concentrate in a room with other people and building
8 walls that won't allow people to vulnerable.

9 Students have felt afraid to seek shelter in the
10 NYC system after being forced to share space during
11 detention and choosing unsafe living options or even
12 sleeping on the trains instead.

13 People without mental health centers arraignment
14 understandably left incarceration requirements who
15 held treatment and using substances to cope. This is
16 not the way forward and this is not how our city
17 should be treating people. I agree.

18 My students and I are here today looking at you
19 to interrupt the status quo. To understand and send
20 a message to New York City, this will not be allowed
21 to continue happening on our watch.

22 Please help protect future leaders and strengthen
23 our communities by ensuring we decarcerate NYC,
24 invest in our neighborhoods and confine the least
25

2 amount of people possible in the best conditions
3 possible. That will be all.

4 JOHN JILER: Hi, my name is John Jiler, I live a
5 few blocks from here. Stones thrown for me on
6 proposed White Street Venue and I accept the idea
7 that people have done bad things should face
8 consequences. But my question is, what if the
9 punishment exceeds the crime?

10 And if people do time under such brutal
11 conditions, that they begin to feel they are have not
12 only paid their debt to society but overpaid it. So,
13 that now, society owes something to them and when
14 they are released, they go out and get it and that is
15 how a permanent criminal class is created.

16 So, it just seems to me that if safety is the
17 issue, wouldn't it be great if people could emerge
18 from prison? Forget rehabilitation, just emerge from
19 prison without being named or permanently embittered
20 or ruined, wouldn't that be great?

21 And you know, I am a lifetime New Yorker. I have
22 been here for 73 years; I think we can pull this off.
23 And people have said that these four proposed new
24 community facilities are doomed to fail and in
25 another five years we will be back here condemning

2 these four mini Rikers Islands that we created.

3 Well, I say, how do you know that? How the hell do
4 you know that? Isn't it worth a try? Isn't the most
5 important thing in the world to try to make it
6 better? Because I will tell you something. I will
7 tell you something, Rikers Island is more than a
8 place, it is a symbol just like the best deal was in
9 the French Revolution.

10 Rikers Island is a blight on the soul of New York
11 City. It is a pit of evil and darkness and
12 oppression and it has got to go. We have got to do
13 better.

14 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you very much for your
15 testimony.

16 Can we just get your name one more time, I am
17 sorry. Sy Eda.

18 DANIEL ROSARIO: Hi, my name is Daniel Rosario.
19 I am testifying on behalf of my colleague Gina
20 William who had to take her daughter to her first day
21 of school today.

22 I am testifying today as a mother, a Brooklyn
23 resident, an advocate, an employee at the Fortune
24 Society.

2 I currently live with my daughter a couple blocks
3 away from the proposed Brooklyn Community jail site.
4 After being incarcerated on Rikers Island, I stand
5 here today, well, I sit here today, in support of
6 building the community jails.

7 If my incarceration experience had a famous
8 title, it would be named after the tale of two cities
9 but with a much different plot twist. I have been
10 confined in Rikers Island and in Bedford Hills
11 Correctional facility. While Rikers is a jail and
12 Bedford is a maximum-security prison, they have many
13 differences and yet much in common.

14 Every day I thank God that Bedford Hills exist
15 and hope that Rikers Island closes. Rikers is a
16 dark, cold, destructive and dehumanizing place. It
17 dragged me down to one of the lowest points in my
18 life mentally, emotionally and physically. I found
19 out that I was two weeks pregnant during intake.

20 For the first five to six months, I had to share
21 a cell which meant struggling with nausea, heartburn,
22 vomiting, headaches, dizziness, leg cramps, and
23 everything else associated with pregnancy in a tiny
24 space with an open toilet, all in front of a
25 stranger.

2 Yet the people I was incarcerated with cared for
3 me the most. People brought me food when the guards
4 refused to allow me to eat, sometimes for days at a
5 time. Food is a source of control and I was told
6 they were going to break me, because they didn't like
7 the way that I spoke. I was too tough for a pregnant
8 lady, whatever that was supposed to mean.

9 But like many women, I was subjected to
10 inappropriate physical behavior. Rikers has too many
11 blind spots, not captured on any camera. But
12 finally, one day I reached the other city, Bedford
13 Hills Nursery Program. A place with windows
14 streaming in sunlight, walls with bright colors,
15 characters from children's books and sounds of
16 friendly people singing. I could finally breath
17 again. I was in a place where I could actually see
18 myself becoming a parent.

19 Some of my best friendships started there and
20 continued to this day. I felt like I could do better
21 there, because it felt like a community. I am forever
22 grateful for the relationship I was able to form of
23 my daughter for those first 18 months and I wonder if
24 our relationship would have ever been the same
25 without.

2 Please support this plan, because every parent
3 should have the opportunity I had at Bedford and no
4 one should have to be subjected to the way we
5 incarcerate people on Rikers Island. We are all
6 human.

7 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you so much. Thank
8 you, panel. I appreciate it.

9 Wendy Pincus, Gerald Lewis, Ed Chin, Joan Bank,
10 Victor Huey, Henry Chang, Marianne Kaaba, Sharee
11 Komura, Diana Petty, Tom Burns, Shawn Hudson, Noel
12 Frieze, I believe he testified. Cheryl Fettick,
13 Cheryl is here, good.

14 Okay, we are going to go one more time. Okay
15 panel, please state your name. You may begin.

16 VICTOR HUEY: Okay, my name is Victor Huey, I am
17 a long-time resident of Chinatown.

18 Chinatown as a community is dying. It's been
19 there for 150 years. The reason why Chinatown
20 existed was because of racism. When the Chinese were
21 brought over to build the railroads, after they
22 finished, they said, get the hell out. You are not a
23 citizen, you can't vote, you don't have any rights in
24 court. So, we formed Chinatown to survive and over
25 the years, my father and my grandfather served in the

2 United States Military. They were not out to be
3 citizens until after the war.

4 I am the first generation of children born in the
5 United States because there were no women allowed
6 until 1946. When Chinatown started to grow in 1966,
7 when they changed the immigration law, it went from
8 30,000 to 300,000 people. Chinatown blew up. We
9 survived, we worked hard.

10 In 1982, when they built this Tomb's jail, we
11 said no jail and yet they built the jail over 12,000
12 people marching. And now, here we are again. You
13 want to build a 50-story jail and what voice do we
14 have? Oh, 911, take away the parking, take away the
15 jobs, take away everything, yet we still work hard.
16 You want to take us - oh, too many Asians in
17 Stuyvesant. Oh, too many kids working too hard in
18 gifted programs. Take that away. Are you improving
19 the city, or you want to do something to improve the
20 city by providing programs and you indicted people
21 instead of dividing people with these bullshit
22 policies.

23 SHAWN HUDSON: Yes, good evening, my name is
24 Shawn Hudson. I am a resident of Bronx and a member
25 of No New Jails and Take Back the Bronx.

2 We can all agree that Rikers Island is an archaic
3 diabolic structure that was created to enforce modern
4 enslavement, creating a culture that breaks and does
5 not rehabilitate those that are sentenced there.

6 We can also agree that this isn't a debate or
7 argument about land or how tall the building is or
8 who doesn't want it in their backyard, this is about
9 people. This hearing is more than that, it's about
10 how our city's infrastructure is crumbling each and
11 every single day while we plan to spend billions of
12 dollars on new jails.

13 They say there is no money for our childrens
14 future. That there is no money in improved public
15 housing. There is no money for that, but there is
16 \$11 billion for new jails.

17 There is no money to create affordable housing to
18 help the homeless. There is no money to fix the MTA,
19 yet somehow, some way, they find billion and billions
20 of fucking dollars to fan the flames of mass
21 incarceration. I ain't watching shit man, back up.

22 Fan the flames of mass incarceration for
23 generations to come. In short, we don't have money
24 for classrooms, yet we have money for cages. Yet, we
25 have money to keep 500 cops in every subway across

2 the city. Yet we have enough money to pay Eric
3 Garners killer for five years while we're waiting for
4 the slow grinding gears of justice that often halt
5 when Black and Brown lives are at stake. These
6 politicians are nothing more than salespeople.

7 So, I guess your slogan is coffins and cages for
8 the poor, freedom sold separately. Being Black or
9 Brown is not a crime, being poor isn't a crime, being
10 queer, trans, isn't a crime. Yet, anyone who fits
11 that description is criminalized in the city. Put in
12 prisons in the hood doesn't guarantee the closing of
13 Rikers. The only thing that guarantees is that more
14 victims like Kalief Browder and Layleen Polanco are
15 coming soon to a hood near you.

16 Close Rikers now. Don't build any new jails and
17 fuck all of you.

18 UNIDENTIFIED: Good afternoon. I have been here
19 the whole day. It's clear the message either is
20 opposed or in favor. It's clear that -

21 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: State your name.

22 BERNARDO SANDERS: Bernardo Sanders. It's clear
23 that the people of New York is against spending money
24 on jails. We don't need more jails; we need programs
25 for the community to help people not to go to jails.

3 It's important at this point that we don't have
4 programs that will be able to help the community.

5 I've been hearing the whole day that there is no
6 program but there's money. There's money to build
7 new jails. At this point, I believe - the panel who
8 was here this morning, they should be ashamed of
9 themselves because there was not ever to answer what
10 specifically what programs are built for the people
11 who are in jails. For the community of low incomes
12 to help them to not go into jails. They were not
13 able to say what kind of programs they put in place
14 in order to help this community.

15 At this point, I couldn't say one program
16 specifically. We need to go to our centers where
17 people would be able to learn music, dance, and to
18 learn to play a musical instruments, guitar or piano
19 or something. Those kinds of programs will be able
20 to help the low-income families to have their
21 childrens busy and that way those kids will not be
22 able to be in the street doing something there is no
23 need to do.

24 This is the kind of programs we need, and I hope
25 that the people, the panel that was here this morning
be able to hear this and at least to understand that

2 we need those viable programs. Good homes, good
3 centers for all our community.

4 CHERYL FETTICK: My name is Cheryl Fettick. Good
5 afternoon members of the City Council and my fellow
6 New Yorkers. Thank you for giving me the opportunity
7 to speak to you today.

8 I am opposed to the new jail being proposed for
9 Kew Gardens, Queens and to the process being used to
10 support all of the new neighborhood jails.

11 I am a lifelong resident and homeowner of Rego
12 Park Queens. I live about two miles away from the
13 proposed Kew Gardens Jail facility, a distance that
14 can easily be walked on a nice day. Rego Park is
15 considered part of the same community as Kew Gardens
16 for many purposes. An activist for most of my life,
17 I am a founder of the Independent Community Action
18 Network, I Can. A group which builds coalitions to
19 work on issues.

20 I am opposed to the proposal for several reasons.
21 I listen to the presentation of the plan for the
22 Queens jail and spoke at a hearing before Community
23 Board 9 at Queens Borough Home.

24 The plan presented is vague and sketchy. There
25 were few details presented other than showing

3 renderings of a 27-30 story building which would
4 dominate the neighboring landscape. I had requested
5 to be present at a meeting with my Councilwoman and
6 the Mayor's representatives to discuss the proposal.
7 I was told that this was a private meeting, by
8 invitation only.

9 I have been active in my community for much of my
10 life. I believe that little or no real community
11 input was permitted or included in arriving at this
12 proposal. Community input should be and is required.

13 From the presentation I heard, there was really
14 no study of the effect of proposal on the local
15 community. An environmental impact study analyzing
16 the full effect of the local area is required as part
17 of the legal process to support this project.

18 With little or no - oh gosh, let me just finish
19 by saying even if these facilities are built, it does
20 not guarantee that the programs and the policies that
21 we want to help defendants and help the people who
22 are now being abused in Rikers or elsewhere will be
23 helped.

24 The proponents are assuming that those programs
25 will be there. We are putting the money into the
facilities, billions and billions of dollars into the

2 buildings and then maintaining the buildings. We
3 need to be assisting the people who are in the
4 facilities and the neighboring communities. Thank
5 you very much.

6 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you very much. Thank
7 you, Ms. Fettick.

8 WENDY PINCUS: Hi, my name is Wendy Pincus. I am
9 opposed to de Blasio's plan. I think Rikers should
10 be drastically, drastically reformed. I think \$10
11 billion or \$11 billion is a big waste of money to
12 build new jails that are just going to bring the same
13 problems without reforming the system and when I say
14 that Rikers should be reformed, what I mean is that
15 there should be more public defenders, cases should
16 be speeded up.

17 I believe there should be more educational
18 programs, more programs where the people in Rikers
19 are more likely to get ready for having a job. I
20 believe there should be intervention in certain
21 communities if there is a lot of violence, like if
22 the parent are violent to the kids. If there is a
23 lot of drug use, but I believe \$11 billion to build
24 new jails, are going to probably just have the same
25 problems, is a big waste of money.

2 I mean it will cause congestion in those areas.
3 I mean, Kew Gardens is already heavily congested. I
4 can foresee that if there is a fire or another
5 emergency in a building, elevators don't work
6 whatever, that the building could possibly have to be
7 evacuated and I don't think that's the ideal
8 situation.

9 I just think that even if they say \$9 billion,
10 you know, it's going to run more. There is always
11 going to be cost overruns. I don't know if that's
12 \$11 billion just shoveled out or if there is going to
13 be bonds and interest. I don't even think \$10 or \$11
14 billion represents the true cost. Thank you.

15 JUNE DIRK: Hello, my name is June Dirk, I am
16 here on behalf of Blue Stockings collective. We are
17 a volunteer powered and collectively owned radical
18 bookstore in Grassroots organizing space. We've
19 operated in the lower east side of Manhattan for over
20 20 years now, not far from where the processes jails
21 being built in Chinatown.

22 I'd like to briefly chime in about how saddened I
23 am at the decision to only hold one public hearing
24 regarding this jail plan. And further saddened by the
25 New York City's City Council's shameful display in

2 dismissing the concerns of the public to hold another
3 day of hearings that would alleviate any concerns
4 over the time we would all have to speak. God
5 forbid, the City Council and Land Use Committee
6 actually have to listen to the public before making a
7 decision.

8 The Blue Stocking Collective rises up alongside
9 our comrades in the No New Jails NYC Coalition to
10 demand that City Council Members vote no on Mayor
11 Bill de Blasio's plan to build four new jails in our
12 boroughs.

13 We firmly advocate for the Rikers Island prison
14 complex to be closed without building any new jails
15 or detention facilities and instead hold that the
16 City of New York should invest the proposed \$10
17 billion into our communities.

18 During the past two decades we've seen the
19 gentrification of lower east side, an unchecked rise
20 in police brutality and the continued criminalization
21 of poverty and necessary means of survivals for our
22 neighbors.

23 We want a New York that emboldens communities to
24 create what safety looks like for them based on the
25 AD's of community accountability and mutual aid.

2 The subways covered in ads threatening cash poor
3 New Yorkers who jump the clearance isles, there are
4 notices on the Link NYC kiosks that promote calling
5 911 on neighbors and we have community members coming
6 to a bookstore for help accessing healthcare and
7 urgent needs.

8 That \$10 billion in proposed spending must be
9 invested back into communities and neighborhood
10 infrastructure. The communities themselves must
11 decide where funds are needed most.

12 We are compelled to rate in solidarity with the
13 No New Jails NYC Coalition in opposition to the
14 Mayor's borough-based jail expansion plan.

15 Listen to New Yorkers, we want schools, free
16 clinics, safer affordable housing to address our
17 concerns of harm within communities not jails, not
18 police. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you very much panel.
20 Ramona Ferrara, Ramona?

21 ROMONA FERRARA: Yeah.

22 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Ramona is here, great.
23 Herbert Murray, Devante Tate, John McFarlin, Felix
24 Guzman.

2 Once again, we have Romana, good, Devante Tate,
3 Herbert Murray, John McFarlin, Felix Guzman.

4 Okay, please state your name. You may begin.

5 RAMONA FERRARA: My name is Ramona Ferrara and I
6 am resident of Mitchell Houses in Mott Haven in the
7 South Bronx. I am also a member of the Neighborhood
8 Advisory Committee for the Close Rikers Plan for the
9 City.

10 I join the NAC because of Kalief. I then decided
11 to stay with the NAC after watching the way that
12 Junior was murdered. I bring up the way that he was
13 murdered, because I think we keep forgetting that in
14 communities like mine, where for 30 years, we have
15 not been properly invested in.

16 We have created the types of kids and young
17 adults that murdered him. It is necessary that we
18 move towards the eradication of jails, but it is also
19 unconscionable to me that we turn around today and
20 tell someone like me, or someone like Juniors mother
21 that jails don't have a place in my community when
22 his killers do.

23 Through the NAC, we negotiate it aggressively.
24 More aggressively than any other borough to make sure
25 that the money that's going to be saved through the

2 closure of Rikers gets invested into all of the
3 programming that has been discussed today repeatedly.

4 It's public information, it's on the website for
5 Close Rikers. Some of the ones I want to highlight
6 include youth hubs. Teens in my neighborhood between
7 the ages of 16 to 24 don't have access to clinics.
8 Don't have access to sex education, don't have access
9 to after school programming, don't have access to
10 quality of life.

11 We included NYCHA because I have the most
12 concentrated amount of NYCHA resident's. In every
13 way that we could, we address the gaps that this city
14 has created for Mott Haven. We are constantly told
15 we are no longer burning, but we have been simmering
16 for decades and all of you want to act like that
17 doesn't hurt as much as it did then.

18 Stop taking away the power from those of us that
19 took the table and decided with community input what
20 we need to welcome home those that you failed.

21 DEVANTE TATE: Good evening, my name is Devante
22 from Vocal New York and just like the brother brought
23 up earlier, the gang I was a part of was also
24 indicted on August 28, 2012 New York, Brooklyn.

2 So, Rikers Island has affected myself and a lot
3 of the people in my family and community.

4 I am glad that the city is making efforts towards
5 closing Rikers Island, however, it is very hard to
6 believe in a plan that does not include community
7 investments.

8 The real cause of many of the crimes that people
9 are allegedly on Rikers for is a result of lack of
10 programming, lack of resources, lack of
11 opportunities.

12 A plan that doesn't include community resources
13 for people who are in impacted communities is
14 literally turning a blind eye to a bigger problem. I
15 ask that between now and the next hearing in October
16 that the Mayor's Office at the very minimum, create a
17 draft of the plan that includes not only community
18 investment but an estimated amount of money that will
19 be advocated for community resources.

20 Also, I suggest that you always put first,
21 consider the stories and lives of people personally
22 impacted and even from people who come from those
23 areas when thinking about this plan, because we know
24 what works and we understand deeply.

2 I have heard of people losing offers that were on
3 the table because they missed court. Because
4 correction officers refuse to take them down to
5 court, so the judge got upset and thought it was the
6 defendants fault.

7 I am telling you from experience that people come
8 home, trying to root for themselves but are
9 continually denied opportunities, jobs and resources,
10 and it releases them to fall right back into the
11 proper lifestyle that led them to be in a situation
12 to begin with.

13 I am very fortunate to sit here today because so
14 many people that I know are still upstate and still
15 on Rikers Island and I sometimes forget how many
16 people I know that's in prison right now.

17 Right now, is not the time to get caught up in
18 temporary emotions or get caught up in the impulse,
19 we are in the state of an emergency. So, I really
20 beg you to really act now because a lot of people
21 really do need change as soon as possible. Thank
22 you.

23 HERBERT MURRAY: My name is Herbert Murray. In
24 2016, I joined Just Leadership USA to launch to close
25 Rikers Island Campaign on the step of City Hall

2 because I, myself, suffer to inhumane condition of
3 torture island.

4 I urge the City Council to vote yes to this plan
5 to build borough-based facilities, so we can reinvest
6 ourselves in the rehabilitation of the person who are
7 going through these situations.

8 When I was arrested, I was only 21 years old and
9 my daughter was only 13 months. When I was held at
10 Brooklyn in house of detention at first, my daughter
11 and her mother was able to come to visit me, but when
12 I was transported to Rikers Island, which was many
13 jails instead of one, it was full of anger and
14 despair.

15 The only thing I looked forward was visit from my
16 family, but I almost didn't want them to come to
17 Rikers Island because of the horrific conditions. My
18 trial dragged on for two years. I remember being
19 dragged back and forth at Rikers Island waiting all
20 day for court just for it to be postponed because DOC
21 didn't get me in there in time.

22 It was dehumanizing. I strongly feel I would
23 have had a better chance at my fighting my case if I
24 would have had remained at Brooklyn in house of
25

2 detention. Subsequently, I would not have done 29
3 years for a murder I did not commit.

4 Smaller borough facilities will give us a chance
5 to start over. You hear me speak about facility, not
6 jails, because we can invest ourselves in the
7 rehabilitation of the individual who needs help as
8 opposed to jails was killed to individual spirit.

9 Rikers Island is designed for punishment, not for
10 rehabilitation. Thank you.

11 JOHN MCFARLIN: Good afternoon to the Council
12 Members. My name is John and I am a member of Vocal
13 New York.

14 Today, I come before the Council to present
15 testimony urging members to support a close Rikers
16 plan that will simultaneously allocate additional
17 funds get it toward an investment of community
18 resources in the areas that will be impacted by the
19 existence of the borough-based jail strategy.

20 Please understand that while I support the
21 Mayor's effort to permanently shutter the Rikers
22 Island complex, I cannot support a plan that does not
23 earmark funding for access to resources such as
24 mental health, affordable low-income housing, job
25

3 training, and educational opportunities that will
4 stem the flow of recidivism.

5 Without adequate funding to accompany the massive
6 borough-based project, I feel that the ultimate goal
7 of achieving a zero-jail population in New York City
8 will never be achieved and will produce negative
9 effects that will be thrust upon the backs of the
10 formerly incarcerated.

11 A lack of funding for adequate housing and other
12 sustainable benefits will force those who are
13 recently released to reoffend and commit crimes
14 against their neighbors or other unsuspecting victims
15 of our society. This result will bolster the voice
16 of critics who currently maintain that the Rikers
17 Island facility should remain open or in the
18 alternative that the construction of jails within the
19 four boroughs will lead to disaster.

20 Conversely, an influx of dollars will put most,
21 if not all neighbors at ease if the recently released
22 are utilizing or entering job networking and training
23 sites or educational institutions.

24 [Inaudible 1:55:55] if those that are released
25 are observed entering or leaving housing units in
which they legally reside. Quite candidly if the

2 Mayor and the Council are serious about a successful
3 plan to close Rikers Island then funding must be
4 allocated toward community resources for those who
5 will be the most impacted. Thank you.

6 FELIZ GUZMAN: Hello, hi, my name is Felix
7 Guzman, I am a leader of Local New York and
8 Facilitate on Rikers Debate Project.

9 I come to you as a collection of varied lived
10 experiences, survived traumas, experiential vicarious
11 learning and as an ambassador for community building
12 and civic engagement.

13 I am for closing Rikers and building no new jails
14 that fail. With so many different perspectives
15 present in the audience and the City Council as to
16 how to proceed with closing Rikers and the proposed
17 resolution, one thing should be constantly looked at,
18 what is in the best interest for the community at
19 large. We can agree on one thing - oh come on.

20 Can I request to actually start over Ma'am
21 please?

22 We can agree on one thing, change is necessary to
23 assure that the community at large does not suffer
24 collateral consequences of incarcerated persons
25 within the confines of our city.

2 The amount of money that's being dedicated to
3 this project is quite high. \$9-\$11 billion to build
4 four new borough-based jails would make sense
5 completely if person's detained would be returning to
6 community connected to every resource possible that
7 was lacking prior to arrest and housing conducive to
8 further civic engagement.

9 If that is the alternatives to closing Rikers
10 then let that be at the forefront of this debate. It
11 is important to note that persons currently detained
12 at Rikers are presumed innocent until found guilty
13 and as such should have their dignity recognized.

14 Understanding that it is safe to assume that
15 allocations are simply that, allocations without
16 substantiated proof or evidence. In an ideal world,
17 America would not reserve a place for jails and
18 prisons and our system would be the model for all
19 developed countries to follow.

20 As we know, this is not the case. Rikers is un-
21 affectionately referred to as by those who have
22 survived it as gladiator school and for good reason.
23 Noting that jails in New York City, as they are
24 required, major reform due to the consistent culture
25 that has managed to permeate.

2 Right now, persons detained are being traumatized
3 from the experience and are being discharged to the
4 community without being connected effectively to
5 community supports who can help such individuals
6 become civically involved.

7 Understanding all sides of the present argument,
8 I would like to spotlight that some countries have
9 taken strides to assure that persons arrested and
10 detained are able to work towards rehabilitation
11 through academic offerings, trauma informed
12 therapeutic approaches, restorative victim, aggressor
13 interventions and so forth.

14 If new jails are the compromise for closing
15 Rikers, then let's try to build community around that
16 decision. We in this room, everyone here, has a
17 point which is valid as it related to all sides. But
18 know this, Malcolm, Martin and Nelson could never
19 have effected change if there was not the inherent
20 desire to build within community for the benefit of
21 all to come.

22 Can we make sure that there is compassion at the
23 forefront while working to address the issue at hand?
24 Do we continue to warehouse as is with new jails or
25

2 rehabilitate or build community from the moment we
3 walk out of City Hall today. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you very much panel.
5 Thank you.

6 We are going to call the next panel. Shawanna
7 Vaughn, Eric Dillen, is it Dillenburg? Amanda
8 Gabby[SP?], Ya Shimbra[SP?], Lucy Cocheen[SP?], Trey
9 Freeborn.

10 Trey Freeborn, Lucy Cocheen, Ya Shimbra, Amanda
11 Gabby, Eric Dillenburg, I believe it's Dillenburg, or
12 Dillenburger and Shawanna Vaughn.

13 Diane Karadeniz[SP?], Daniel, I am sorry. Daniel
14 Karadeniz. Robbie Kosteo[SP?], Wa Wachin[SP?],
15 Melissa Marrone[SP?], Amelia Yankee, Dave Thurman,
16 Maggie, Brittney Williams, Ann Renda.

17 We are just going to ask the panel - we're
18 dwindling down, we are going to ask you to please
19 refrain from profanity, from using profanity during
20 the hearing. We want to hear you. Thank you.

21 Panel, please state your name. You may begin.

22 SHAWANNA VAUGHN: Hi my name is Shawanna Vaughn,
23 I am the Director of Silent Cry and I am here on
24 behalf of Rosie's Campaign as well.

2 And so, we're talking about closing Rikers and
3 everything starts with a foundation. And this
4 Island's foundation is toxic, not only because of
5 what it is but where it is. It's on decomposing and
6 unstable ground. It emits garbage and poisonous
7 methane gas and for women, this is a problem for
8 cancer, respiratory issues, and dermatology issues.
9 And the mental health on Rikers is absolutely
10 astounding and we have all talked about healthcare
11 and money that we can reinvest in community.

12 So, I have wrote a resolution called post
13 traumatic prison disorder because we start with the
14 children of incarcerated parents by building more
15 prisons. And so, we can't do this, we have to
16 reallocate and rethink about how we are investing \$8
17 billion and where we are putting it and who we are
18 giving it to. Because if we are talking about
19 reallocating money and creating four neighborhood
20 prisons, are we talking about who is going to build
21 them? Are we talking about what's going in them?

22 I see you giving trinkets and things to
23 communities. We are going to give you grocery stores
24 and we're going to do this and we're going to do
25 that. We're not talking about whose building these

2 foundations, because we know they are not going to be
3 people that look us, you only want to warehouse
4 people in them that look like us. But we're not
5 talking about builders that are Brown or Black.
6 We're not talking about space for nonprofits in these
7 building to holistically provide therapy for the
8 people that you are putting in an un-holistic
9 environment.

10 ERIC DILLENBURGER: Hello, my name is Eric
11 Dillenburg, I am here from the Walkers Street Block
12 Association.

13 Council Members, I have a whole new perspective
14 on your stamina. I have just discovered that
15 fighting for something is exhausting.

16 The jails proposed are the tallest in human
17 history. Their budget busting experiments in
18 carceral fantasy without heat de practicality,
19 physics or history. For 180 years we've been
20 building new jails in Chinatown, always believing
21 that the new one would solve the problem of the old
22 one. A system which has proven ineffective.

23 As each jail failed in succession, Rikers was
24 meant to be the solution and clearly it is not. This
25 experiment will be one of the largest line item

3 expenditure in your municipal budget for years. The
4 priorities are mixed up. If crime might be viewed as
5 pathology, the first line cures are education,
6 health, housing and nutrition, not jail building.

7 Policing in incarceration are society's last line
8 of defense, not the first but jail building will eat
9 up all of the resource at the expense of the others.

10 Worst of all, we believe that this experiment
11 will fail. The jails are too tall for practical use,
12 you cannot engineer yourself out of certain physics
13 problems. How do you get inmates, corrections
14 officers and staff out of a burning tower or timely
15 responded emergencies? How do you keep everybody
16 safe? In a tower, you do not.

17 Jails worldwide have been low rise for good
18 reason. This is a lose, lose, lose scenario. You do
19 nothing to prevent the root causes of crime, you
20 needlessly carve up residential neighborhoods, you do
21 not protect the incarcerated or their minders and
22 your mortgage the future of generations.

23 Robert Moses infamously called up, carved up New
24 York with grand visions. You do not Robert Moses
25 your way out of the social problem. You Mother
Teresa your way out of it.

2 Feed, house, heal, and protect and educate first
3 please. Who would you like to be remembered as.

4 Thank you.

5 LUCY COCHEEN: My name is Lucy Cocheen. I live in
6 Brooklyn; I am known as a community activist to my
7 neighborhood and I represent myself today.

8 Before I begin, I just want to repeat what Phil
9 DePaulo said earlier was in future hearings, the
10 people should speak first. Let the bureaucrats wait
11 and listen because they don't hear the people. They
12 come and they don't give real information, they just
13 repeat the same old dog and pony show. And then they
14 don't listen, and I wish more of the Council Members
15 were able to hear us today. Thank you for those who
16 have stayed and listened and for your attention.

17 So, my question here is do you know what you are
18 voting for? Were you told the size of the jail will
19 be smaller than originally proposed, but there are no
20 new numbers and no new renderings. You are voting on
21 a half-baked plan. There is no public evaluation of
22 how the new Albany legislation will effect the need
23 for new jails or what size they ought to be.

24

25

2 This ULURP application is premature. Until a
3 more modest proposal is submitted by the
4 administration, it should be withdrawn.

5 The four community boards voted no or no with
6 recommendations. That is a rare agreement across the
7 city, and it should be listened to and respected,
8 whether it's 1,500 or 900 beds, this is not a humane
9 way to treat people. You are putting people in cages
10 and both the jailer and the inmates are forced to
11 behave in an aggressive manner in that circumstance.
12 Years of experience proves this as wrong.

13 How is putting human beings in cages reform? We
14 need alternatives to putting people in steel boxes.

15 And I am going to skip a lot of this because I
16 want to say, this is not \$11 billion, it's \$33
17 billion. It's \$11 billion on new jails, \$15-\$20
18 billion to redevelop Rikers and \$250 million for a
19 new training college for Correction Officers. That
20 is the answer to closing Rikers.

21 If you have \$33 billion, if you have \$33 billion
22 put that money into our communities and work with
23 prevention, not putting people in boxes and cages.

24 Thank you.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Sorry, Lucy, just one
3 quick rejoinder to that is I just want to for the
4 record acknowledge that MOCJ, a number of staff
5 members from MOCJ are here including the Deputy
6 Director Dana Kaplan who was testifying and who is
7 with her team in leading up to this entire process.

8 So, they're actually all here and have been here
9 for the entire day.

10 LUCY COCHEEN: Well, that's good to know but in
11 the future, let's put the people first.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Understood, point taken.
13 Thank you.

14 MELISSA MARRONE: Hi, my name is Melissa Marrone
15 and I live in Brooklyn. The positive language that's
16 used to describe the proposed borough-based jails
17 like, modern design, natural light, fresh air, all
18 that, could have been taken from 19 Century
19 penitentiary reformers and it's similar to how Rikers
20 which to be clear should be closed as soon as
21 possible. It would have been spoken of when it was
22 new, and we don't have to make the same mistakes now.

23 I know that many of you on the City Council are
24 supporters of policies to improve policing and
25 justice practices in order to lower the number of

3 people in jail in the first place and investing in
4 communities rather than expanding jails is what you
5 should be doing now to further that work.

6 You have the power to invest those billions of
7 dollars instead in education, social services,
8 housing, healthcare, restorative justice and so much
9 more.

10 Having a more livable city for all it's residents
11 would obviate the need to build more and bigger
12 detention spaces.

13 And I also want to speak of the public librarian
14 over in Brooklyn. Where I see how factors related to
15 incarceration both its causes and its results play
16 out in public space. Factors including poverty,
17 stress, trauma, mental illness, homelessness,
18 structural racism, inequality and much more.

19 I know how much the Council does to keep New York
20 City's libraries functioning as well as they do,
21 definitely especially Council Member Van Bramer, who
22 was here earlier, and I implore you each to think
23 about how the money that this proposed project would
24 cost could be better spent in your communities.

25 This borough-based jails plan will impact the
entire city and should not be considered solely as a

2 development project in four members districts.

3 Rather these billions should be spent directly on
4 community sustainability and safety, not on new
5 jails. Thank you.

6 BRITTNEY WILLIAMS: Hey, so my name is Brittney,
7 I am with No New Jails. I am going to ask some
8 questions that the Council Members Levin, Diana
9 Ayala, and other ones who are supporting this plan
10 behind closed doors will not ask. Dana, does DOC
11 work with ACS through contracts? You are here Dana,
12 DOC, anyone from DOC? Do you all work with ACS
13 through contracts?

14 UNIDENTIFIED: Say your testimony.

15 BRITTNEY WILLIAMS: Hey, don't tell me what to
16 do.

17 ACS runs Horizon and Crossroads. ACS, do they
18 work with ICE? You all are setting this city up.
19 You all are setting this up, because MOCJ has already
20 said that the entire New York City jail population
21 has to go to Rikers for years. You are setting this
22 city up for undocumented people to be caged. You are
23 setting this city up for Black and Brown babies,
24 community members to fill these jails, because none
25 of you on here are time, you all are time limited.

2 You cannot, you cannot say to us that these jails -
3 Rikers will close right now. You cannot say that,
4 can you? So, why are you asking Black and Brown
5 communities to take this risk? Have we not suffered
6 enough? We are talking about slavery, have we not
7 suffered enough, we're talking about the [inaudible
8 2:19:25].

9 Black cults have we not, Trump is our president,
10 wake up. These jails, Bill de Blasio's jails is
11 equivalent to Trump's wall. You all are setting -
12 this is a plan to close Rikers Island but we know
13 that the design and build initiative allows you all
14 to say, you, you have until April 2020 to pass it
15 through private and public partnerships which we know
16 that big banks are just pulled out of private prison
17 is funding this plan to.

18 So, if they build it, they will fill it.

19 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you.

20 BRITTNEY WILLIAMS: Private prisons, just the
21 same thing. They are going to build it, fill it, and
22 you are -

23 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you for your testimony.

24 BRITTNEY WILLIAMS: Going to have not only Black
25 and Brown people -

2 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you for your testimony
3 panel, thank you very much.

4 CROWD: Chanting No new jails. No new jails.
5 Close Rikers now.

6 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Ladies and gentleman, ladies
7 and gentleman, really, security would really like to
8 clear the room right now, but I really would want you
9 to hear the rest of the panels that have come and
10 spent literally all day with us. So, if we can
11 maintain some more self-control and respect, it would
12 be greatly appreciated, because if we have another
13 outburst, security will clear the room and the panels
14 will be left to testify.

15 So, we're going to call the next panel. Micelle
16 Seldore, Mary Busser[SP?], Dave Elkie[SP?], Rita
17 Zimmer, Alejo Rodriguez and Daoud Nashi.

18 UNIDENTIFIED: [INAUDIBLE 2:22:55].

19 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you.

20 Tonya Kruphut[SP?], is it Alli Swanson or Ahi
21 Swanson? The last name is Swanson.

22 So, I called Dave, Mary, Micelle Sildore[SP?],
23 Alli Swanson and Tonya Kruphut not here? Okay.
24 Daniel Pennetta, Daniel Minelli Pennetta, Brian
25 Holbrook, Connie Temple, Andaya Arnold or Andie

2 Arnold, Teresa Sweeney, Phillip White, Mark Koenig,
3 Shermain Black, Rona SugarLove, Rona is here, hi
4 Rona. Edwin Santana, is it Madya Sidney from Beyond
5 Rosie's 2020? Rita Zimmer, Cynthia Bracket, Beth
6 Shivery, Bobbie Campbell, Quin Raymond, Natashaia
7 White, Steve Donofrio, Frank Guessgo[SP?], Ilene
8 Gerard, Brian Kramer, Brian's here, great.

9 Okay panel, welcome and please state your name.

10 MICELLE SELDORE: Good evening, my name Micelle
11 Seldore and I am here to speak in support of closing
12 Rikers and shifting towards a much smaller borough-
13 based system of detention. I am the program
14 associate of the independent commission on New York
15 City Criminal Justice and Incarceration Reform, but I
16 want to speak as a child of Briarwood, a proud child
17 of Asian immigrants and descendant of a long line of
18 freedom fighters and as a fellow New Yorker.

19 This is not the first movement to close Rikers,
20 but we must absolutely make sure it is the last. To
21 try to stop this process, we condemn New Yorkers to
22 continue to languish in dangerous and often merciless
23 conditions on the toxic island.

2 It does not improve public safety to operate an
3 excessively punitive system and it is an immense
4 disservice to our city.

5 Now is the time to address concerns about the
6 plan, but it is not the time to restart this process.
7 The people power of directly impacted leaders in the
8 Close Rikers campaign and other advocates who have
9 been working relentlessly on this movement got us to
10 this point and advocates are continuing to improve
11 the plan.

12 Your vote can help ensure that the best plan is
13 put forward, not only to close Rikers but to drive
14 our city on a new path to invest in true public
15 safety and community wellness. We are already
16 working towards a future where our city holds many
17 fewer people in jail and we can ensure that momentum
18 continues with approval of this plan. We can create
19 a future where if a person is incarcerated, they are
20 held in a safer, more normalized environment with
21 access to trauma informed programming and
22 comprehensive medical care. And at the same time,
23 make sure these kinds of services are robust, well-
24 funded, and expanded in our communities to divert
25 people from justice involvement.

2 Plans to close Rikers in the past were defeated,
3 extending the human rights crisis that exists today.
4 There is a long road ahead, but this can be the first
5 step to guarantee us on a path to permanently closing
6 Rikers and transforming our criminal justice system.

7 Please vote in support of this plan. Thank you.

8 MARY BUSSER: Good evening, my name is Mary
9 Busser. I am a lifelong resident of downtown
10 Brooklyn and I was also an assistant Chief of Mental
11 Health at Rikers Island working at the mental health
12 center and what was then, the five hundred solitary
13 confinement unit among other posts.

14 Based on my five-year experience I wrote the
15 book, Lockdown on Rikers. Although, there is so much
16 I could say about the importance of closing Rikers, I
17 think the best way to convey it is through an
18 incarcerated persons own voice.

19 With this in mind, here is a short excerpt from
20 my book that depicts a clinic encounter at the George
21 Motchan Detention Center.

22 I stepped out to the waiting area where Hector
23 Rodriguez was pacing the floor. As soon as I
24 introduced myself, he said, can you get me out of
25 here miss. Can you get me back to the Brooklyn

2 house. They brought me out here to Rikers last night
3 and the thing is, my mother is very sick. She will
4 never be able to make the trip out here. We don't
5 have a car. I am scared she could die. My bail is
6 only a few hundred bucks, but we just don't have it.

7 Being in jail is bad enough but at least let me
8 see my family, please miss, please. My heart sunk;
9 this was an all too familiar request. The smaller
10 jails are closer to home, easier for family visits
11 and everyone wanted to go back. But this was
12 strictly a DOC matter and there was nothing the
13 mental health department could do. I am so sorry, I
14 said, maybe you could speak to a captain. Yeah, I
15 will, he said hopefully. Maybe this is just
16 temporary.

17 Although I hoped he would be sent back, I'd never
18 known of anyone being returned to a borough house and
19 sure enough Hector Rodriguez remained at Rikers but
20 tragically, about three months later, his worst fear
21 was realized when his mother died.

22 The distraught man was brought to the clinic
23 where we tried to console him as best we could. I
24 didn't get to see her, he cried. My mother is dead,

2 and I never got to see her one last time, Oh, my God.
3 Thank you.

4 DAVE ELKIE: Hi my name is Dave Elkie, I live in
5 the neighborhood of the Brooklyn Detention Center. I
6 am a member of the Justice Ministries Committee of
7 the Presbytery of New York City.

8 I urge our City Council to vote yes to this plan,
9 that will enable the closure of Rikers and to commit
10 to improving that plan in several ways.

11 First, the closing the remaining active jails in
12 Rikers Island is a moral imperative and human rights
13 crisis. Action needs to be taken immediately to
14 close and demolish at least half of the remaining
15 Riker Island jails which are not needed to reduce
16 population and access capacity.

17 This can create immediate cost saving to provide
18 funds for alternative programs to incarceration. It
19 also frees up land for more productive uses.

20 Two, because of the recent criminal justice
21 reform in this state, the total capacity for borough-
22 based jails should be 3,000 people instead of the
23 4,000 that is planned. The reduced population should
24 be distributed to the four proposed borough-based
25 jails in line with this. The planned capacity and

2 new facility in Brooklyn and the other three borough-
3 based facilities should each be reduced to 750 people
4 each.

5 This was significantly reduced to height and mass
6 of the buildings. Also, the design should be
7 flexible to enable the jail floors to be converted to
8 drug or mental health treatment facilities in the
9 future.

10 Operation of the facility; the city must create
11 facilities with the least restrictive conditions that
12 support a restorative and rehabilitative approach to
13 incarceration as opposed to punitive approach
14 currently in use. The people managing and running a
15 new facility must be capable and willing to provide a
16 healing environment. This requires a different
17 social services-oriented staff and management with
18 new job descriptions that must run the facility.

19 It is imperative that the punitive environment of
20 the jails not be transferred to the new facilities.

21 Finally, closing Rikers Island jails is an urgent
22 human rights issue we cannot delay closing this
23 embarrassment to our city.

24 RONA SUGARLOVE: Hi, my name is Ms. Rona
25 Sugarlove, I am a member of Beyond Rosie's 2020

2 Campaign, part of the women's community justice
3 association activist and LGBTQ community.

4 We support the city's plan to close Rikers and
5 keep the women out of location. We urge the Council
6 to approve the plan but recommend modification that
7 include a [inaudible 2:37:31] facility in Manhattan
8 which would be currently located closer to families
9 and the courts and better serve the unique needs of
10 women, incorporating trauma informed care and
11 programming in a safe and secure environment instead
12 of the current plan to [inaudible 2:37:58] to propose
13 Queens Detention Facility for men.

14 As a transgender woman caged for 35 years, raped
15 twelve times while in the Department of Corrections.
16 I survived ten years in solitary confinement with no
17 treatment at all. Any new facility for anyone that
18 identifies as a woman needs to be included.

19 Programming that individualize in comprehensive
20 service inside, should include mental health
21 services, treatment, that's transparent with people
22 back into community.

23 So, sad fully we wrap around service that should
24 be invert people when we come out to society, so that

2 we can continue these services, which I still haven't
3 gotten since I have been released from prison.

4 Women deserve and should have their own facility.
5 80 percent of women on Rose M. Singer facility have
6 had severe trauma inflicted upon them by men. Some
7 alternatives to consider in Manhattan include the
8 Lincoln Correction Facility in Harlem.

9 We are calling for the Rose Singer Detention
10 Center to be shut down in 2020 with the women we held
11 back at the wrong facility. Thank you very much.

12 BRIAN KRAMER: Hi, my name is Brian Kramer, I am
13 Co-Chair of the Justice Team of the Fourth
14 Universalist Society.

15 We are a unitarian universals church in the upper
16 west side and we present the following statement.

17 The Fourth Universal Society in the City of New
18 York affirms the inherent worth and dignity of every
19 person and is strongly committed to justice, equity
20 and compassion in human relations.

21 As a Unitarian, Universalist Congregation that
22 has been part of the fabric of this City for 180
23 years, we support the goal of world community with
24 peace, liberty and justice for all and we support the
25 closure of Rikers Island facilities. These are a few

2 of the reasons: The remoteness of Rikers location
3 entirely undermines the fair process of the just
4 legal system. Rikers is only accessible by a single
5 city bus line and requires passing through multiple
6 security check points which takes an entire day.

7 After going through this process, families and
8 lawyers are frequently denied visits because of
9 lockdowns. Because of the location, detainees often
10 have to be awake without meals for more than 16 hours
11 a day, just to attend court hearings. The conditions
12 in Rikers Island facilities are inhumane and a public
13 health concern. Many current and former detainees
14 continue to report living with insect and rat
15 infestations along with leaks and water damage.
16 These conditions are difficult, not only for the
17 incarcerated but also for corrections officers who
18 work there on a daily basis.

19 There are multiple reports on mistreatment on
20 Rikers Island ranging from small daily humiliations
21 to occasional acts of shocking brutality. Most
22 recently Layleen Polanco, a transgender woman died in
23 her cell two months after she was arrested on a
24 misdemeanor assault charge.

2 For these and many other reasons, the Fourth
3 Universalist Society Justice Team stands in solidarity
4 with our neighbors and friends echoing the voices of
5 those in particular who have directly experienced
6 Rikers. We also support the construction of
7 alternative jails that confide safe and
8 rehabilitative services to incarcerated neighbors and
9 uphold the human dignity of all persons.

10 I urge the City Council to advance this plan and
11 fight for the investments we are calling for to
12 improve this plan. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you so much panel. I
14 really appreciate you hanging out today. Thank you.

15 Allison Williams, Jan Lee, Chairman Shu from the
16 Federation Association Chinese Community, Maria
17 Lafaros[SP?] Shawn Lynn, Melissa Marrone, Prudence,
18 Amelia Yankee, Jason Waltman, Betty Vine, Molly Baum,
19 Sylvia Fried, Hillary Ashtyn, Obdule Romani[SP?] from
20 DRUM, Farhana Octur[SP?] from DRUM, Caitlin Moss,
21 Maun Mopatra[SP?], Savita Jashan.

22 Okay panel, please state your name and you may
23 begin when you are ready.

24 MAUN MAPATRA: My name is Maun Mapatra and I am a
25 member of No New Jails.

2 I support the immediate closure of Rikers Island
3 without building new jails and I will read the
4 statement of Jeremy Levenson as follows: My name is
5 Jeremy and I am a fourth year medical student at
6 Mount Sinai School of Medicine here in New York City
7 and also a doctoral student at the UCLA Center for
8 social medicine in Los Angeles, where I currently
9 live.

10 I have been studying public mental health for the
11 past five years. Like New York, LA operates some of
12 the largest jails in the world and those jails are
13 disproportionately made up of people who use drugs or
14 have a serious mental illness.

15 In recent years at the voices of loved ones of
16 these incarcerated people grew louder in class action
17 lawsuits, continued to pile up elected leaders and LA
18 decided enough was enough, that something had to be
19 done.

20 After hiring consultants, the LA county leaders
21 came to a decision. They wanted to build a treatment
22 jail. It was due to our complete frustration at this
23 point that my center for social medicine, mentors,
24 colleagues and I first became involved.

2 As researchers and care givers, we know too well
3 the disruption and harm that incarceration causes our
4 patients and that our hospitals and healthcare system
5 need to take responsibility for their care.

6 To express our deep concern that the plan would
7 continue to terribly flawed approach that led us to
8 this point, that is to try to use the criminal legal
9 system to resolve failings of our health systems, we
10 met with elected officials, we submitted testimony,
11 we signed petitions, which in fact received the
12 support of the majority of UCLA Psychiatry residents.

13 We were told however, that it was a done deal.
14 Listening to the wisdom of the Justice LA Coalition,
15 we decided to keep trying. We built a larger
16 coalition, this time bringing in emergency medical
17 doctors and jail-based clinicians. Having worked in
18 the New York City Jails, I personally pointed to the
19 success of New York, where health providers have been
20 in the lead.

21 And finally, last month, LA's leadership listened
22 when they canceled a contract for the new jail and
23 turned over the reform process to help leadership.

24 So, it has been quite distressing to return to
25 New York to witness leaders to make the same mistake.

2 It is not acceptable to make incarceration the
3 expected outcome of using drugs and having a serious
4 mental illness, but my building new jails, new jail
5 mental health beds, not hospital beds, but jail beds
6 in a hospitals so called therapeutic jails. This
7 plan ensures it will continue to be the expected
8 outcome; it ensures it.

9 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you.

10 MAUN MAPATRA: That is not acceptable, reject
11 this plan.

12 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you for your testimony.

13 JAN LEE: Hello Council Members, my name is Jan
14 Lee from Neighbors United Below Canal. I am a
15 Chinatown resident of three generations. We agree
16 that criminal justice reforms are long overdue, and
17 change does indeed need to happen. That road to
18 criminal justice is a long one, but that road cannot
19 be paved with the lives of seniors in my community
20 who are going to be living next to this construction
21 site for ten years.

22 A year ago, when our community was notified in a
23 closed-door invitation only meeting that a jail
24 would-be built-in Chinatown, we knew very little
25 about the impacts of that construction, we now know.

2 Thanks to scholars in the field of medicine at
3 NYU Langone, that particulate matter, noise,
4 vibration, change, can so seriously affect our senior
5 community, some living next to this demolition site
6 that they will die a premature death. They will die
7 a death where their last gasps of air will be filled
8 with toxic dust. Their minds will be confused and
9 disoriented and the last view out their window will
10 be a massive jail, where there was once sunlight.

11 We know that other cities in America have chosen
12 a path that leads to healing, to caring, to providing
13 mental health services support outside of the jail
14 walls. Instead of investing in permanent cages for
15 humans who will only be receiving services inside the
16 jails. We know that investment in services outside
17 of jails is a 21st Century concept while building
18 jails to hold thousands of people forever is a 19
19 Century construct.

20 We know that it's time to learn from the mistakes
21 of Blackwell Island, from Rikers Island, from the
22 Tombs, from Manhattan Detention Center, from the
23 barge, so many jails. We know that building more
24 jails where smaller ones once stood is a mistake that
25 keeps repeating itself. It is for some the gift that

2 keeps on giving. Now is your chance to break this
3 cycle of incarceration rather than investing in
4 people. A singular solution that is centuries old, a
5 so-called cure that is prescribed by an absentee
6 Mayor born of concrete and steel, cannot be your only
7 choice.

8 Now is your chance to listen to the data to
9 understand that our fragile, minority community will
10 wither under the suffocating weight of this jail of
11 cages, of antiquated reminders of Blackwell Island,
12 of Rikers Island, of a jail solution rather than a
13 truly modern model of how this city should function.
14 Thank you.

15 SAVITA JASHAN: Good evening everyone. My name
16 is Savita. I am a resident of South Richmond Hill
17 Queens. I am a member of DRUM, Desis Rising up and
18 Moving. I am a mother of three children and my
19 husband is undocumented.

20 In 2017, my husband was illegally detained by ICE
21 with NYPD help and he was sent to a detention center.
22 I organized my community to free my husband and the
23 father of my children from deportation. I succeeded
24 in keeping my family together. It was not easy, but
25 it was worth it. Which is why I am horrified that

2 you people are actually looking at a plan to spend
3 \$11 billion for four new jails in our city.

4 If you build more jails, they will look for
5 excuses to fill these jails with our people.

6 Building these jails will lead to more immigrants,
7 like my family being arrested and deported. This
8 will lead to more families like mine being separated.

9 I have worked too hard to keep my family together
10 and will not stand by and allow you to approve a plan
11 that will break up anyone else's family. How can we
12 say we are a sanctuary city if we are putting
13 immigrants in danger? Instead of building new jails,
14 the city should invest in legal services to support
15 immigrants and keeping families together. Invest the
16 \$11 billion in mental health services, in the school
17 I send my children to, and the hospital we depend on.
18 The subways we use to get to work, but do not spend
19 this money on prisons that remove my family and my
20 community from being able to exist in this city.

21 If you really care about protecting immigrants,
22 keeping families together, being a real sanctuary
23 city, then all of you Council Members must vote no on
24 this new jail plan. Vote no on new jails, vote no on
25

2 wasting \$11 billion to separate people from their
3 families.

4 ALLISON WILLIAMS: Hi everyone, my name is
5 Allison Williams. I am in here because I have eight
6 years' experience - oh sorry, thank you.

7 I came here because I have eight years of
8 experience in the fields of trauma and substance use
9 research and I also more importantly I have had my
10 loved ones had their consent and bodily autonomy
11 violated. There mismanagement of their mental health
12 crisis by the carceral system.

13 I have concerns that the treatment centers within
14 the jail system will not be uniquely different then
15 the ones that are already in place and that treatment
16 centers in the community with mobile crisis centers
17 as included in the plan that they are suggesting for
18 better communities is the way to go. But what I am
19 mostly feeling right now is confusion, because this
20 was a meeting about a land use application.

21 You know, I looked at all of the supporting
22 documents for this meeting and not one of them has
23 the word Rikers in it. Not one of them says anything
24 about the better communities plan, so I support
25 closing Rikers and I support the better communities

2 plan and reinvesting in communities but I don't
3 understand why these are being pitched as opposition
4 when what I heard in this room was almost complete -
5 there are 200 people who came here to testify and
6 every single one of them supports closing Rikers in
7 some fashion. I don't understand why we're being
8 asked to choose between doing that and between
9 building these new jails when there really not in
10 opposition to each other. And I feel disrespected
11 that it's being framed that way and I just want to
12 say that also my respect for the formerly
13 incarcerated people on both sides of this issue, even
14 though it's the same side and it's your movement that
15 you built here. And I think that the city owes you
16 more than just reinvestment in your communities and
17 owes you reparations. Thank you.

18 FARHANA OCTUR: Hi everyone, my name is Farhana
19 Octur. I am a high school student from Brooklyn.
20 Today, I came here right after school after finishing
21 my first day of senior year to demand closing Rikers
22 and without building no new jails in our community.

23 My school has only once college counselor for a
24 thousand seniors. We have to wait for months to meet
25 with our college counselor. Why can't we use those

2 billions of dollars to hire more counselors in our
3 community and not building jails? Why can't we use
4 those billions of dollar to build more research labs,
5 computer labs and fund more art classes, dance
6 classes or music classes?

7 \$11 billion should be used to hire more
8 therapists, our mental health care system in our
9 schools, in every single school. The \$11 billion
10 should be used for job programs for students for
11 youth members in our schools.

12 People do not need more jails to prison more
13 Black and Brown people. Why spend \$11 billion in
14 building new jails when we cannot even fix our
15 overcrowded understaffed, under resourced school
16 system? Instead of building new jails, why can't we
17 use that money towards our education and empower our
18 youth? We don't need new jails; we don't need more
19 cops in our school or in our community. What we need
20 is more counselors, more programs, more after school
21 programs, more teachers in our schools.

22 Building prisons does not solve the reasons why
23 someone ended up in prison. Building prisons only
24 provides the excuse to fill them up and nothing more.

2 Invest in our community, invest in our future. Don't
3 invest into locking us up. Thank you.

4 OBDULE ROMANI: My name is Obdule Romani.

5 Character, who you are and what you do are not
6 isolated concepts, but rather detwinned.

7 What you do speaks volumes on your character. In
8 the coming months, your actions will present your
9 character. I won't sit here and tell you why this
10 plan of building new jails is beyond disgusting, as
11 my allies have already relayed that message. You
12 have decided the voice of the people doesn't matter
13 to you by taking that action, you have proved to the
14 people as representatives of the people that your
15 character does not stand for the will of the people.

16 Instead, it represents your disloyalty, neglect,
17 ignorance, and above all your eminence greed. I ask
18 that you take a deep look as representation of
19 yourself. Your view of view is subjective, as is our
20 view of you. If you continue down this treacherous
21 road, these views will spread further and further
22 apart. Therefore, I must urge you, please hear us.
23 Don't just sit here and listen, take our ideas into
24 consideration, as you have taken an oath to represent

2 them. Prove to us that your character is one that
3 deserves to be remembered and reelected. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you very much panel. I
5 appreciate your passion and I seriously do appreciate
6 your time. Thank you.

7 UNIDENTIFIED: Not a single one of these people
8 wanted new jails, just so you know.

9 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you very much, thank
10 you.

11 Mia Soto, Kim Powell, Edger Aseteopan from Exalt,
12 Elizabeth Hovey, Stephanie Kocker[SP?]. Stephanie
13 Kocker, Elizabeth Hovey, Edger Aseteopan[SP?], Kim
14 Powell, Mia Soto, Adria Arnold, Carol Saint Clair
15 Corporation for Supportive Housing, Carol, not here?

16 UNIDENTIFIED: [Inaudible 3:07:41].

17 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you. Santos Rodriguez,
18 Beth Shivery, Nicole Triplet, Murphy Austin,
19 Inidfay[SP?] Owens, Anastasia Thompkins, Althea
20 Stewards, Stevens, TS Candy, Michael Edelman, King
21 Downing, Attala; I definitely cannot make out the
22 last name. Sumanieor[SP?] is the last name from the
23 G & A Institute. Jamie Moleska[SP?].

24 Okay, thank you panel for your diligence, please
25 state your name.

2 MIA SOTO: Good evening, my name is Mia Soto, I
3 am the community organizer for the held Justice
4 Program at the New York Lawyers for the Public
5 Interest, also known as NYLPI.

6 NYLPI's strong commitment to racial equity,
7 healthcare justice and the civility of rights in New
8 York have led us to support the work of the Close
9 Rikers Coalition and other grassroots organizations
10 which are pushing for reform in the criminal justice
11 system and expansion of community investments in the
12 city.

13 After pulling the needs of the community, NYLPI
14 urgently advocates for investments in community-based
15 systems and resources that support and keep people
16 safe, especially those with mental illness. And
17 access the network of neighborhood mental health
18 services is critical for those with disabilities.

19 Additionally, the city can decarcerate a
20 significant number of individuals with mental illness
21 if they are diverted to appropriate community
22 alternative resources.

23 Our criminal justice system reflects a historical
24 and continuing lack of investments in the health and
25 wellbeing of communities. Early intervention and

2 healthcare, housing, employment, and other social
3 services is critical to reducing recidivism for more
4 incarcerated and reentry individuals with mental
5 health needs. This is, therefore, the right moment
6 for the city to change the narrative around mass
7 incarceration and make critical investments in
8 resources that can meet the needs of people with
9 mental and behavioral needs.

10 NYLPI calls on the city to listen to the
11 communities consistent demands for a more effective
12 healthcare services and greater investments in
13 resources and ensure public safety.

14 Additionally, we strongly urge the city to place
15 the welfare and wellbeing of communities first.
16 Simply by providing free quality community based
17 mental health services that both prevent and respond
18 to mental health crisis. By expanding supportive
19 housing which is the critical aspect of stability for
20 New Yorkers with mental health needs. Thank you.

21 UNIDENTIFIED: [Inaudible 3:12:37]

22 MIA SOTO: Oh, thank you. By tackling the
23 unemployment and under employment of communities
24 ravished by mass in criminalization.

2 And lastly, in reinvesting in our schools and
3 education to end the generational cycles of poverty
4 and oppression that have negatively impacted our
5 communities. Thank you.

6 AKEEM SHAMAL POWELL: Greetings everybody, my
7 name is Akeem Shamal Powell and I represent Exalt
8 Youth.

9 Greetings to all ladies and gentleman, Members of
10 the City Council and guests. Thank you for the
11 opportunity to testify today. My name is Akeem
12 Shamal Powell, I am 25 years old. I am a recent
13 Magna Cum Laude college graduate of CUNY CSI, college
14 of Staten Island. I achieved a GPA of over 3.78 and
15 I have a bachelor's degree in English and African
16 studies.

17 When I was sixteen, I had criminal justice
18 contact and subsequently I was sent to Rikers,
19 spending close to a week in the middle of the summer
20 of 2011 on Rikers Island amongst hardened teenagers
21 in an adult facility. It was where I made a decision
22 to strive for better. Going against the tide of
23 teenagers reacting with anger and frustration towards
24 each other and the jail staff was my motive.

2 Although I was mentally preparing for the
3 violence that I heard many inmates and people who
4 were on the rock, also known as Rikers Island
5 undergone, I knew that his lifestyle wasn't one that
6 I wanted for myself. I told myself I wasn't going
7 back. I completed an educational and workforce
8 program through Exalt Youth and now I work as an
9 alumni instructor for other youths who have been
10 caught up in the system.

11 I am testifying today in support of borough-based
12 jail plans and to close Rikers. Throughout my time
13 spent on Rikers, I had a reality check and an
14 epiphany while in bondage. I wasn't prioritizing my
15 high school education by skipping school and not
16 caring whether I failed or excelled. And by taking
17 heat to uncondusive peers who really didn't care
18 about my wellbeing and wouldn't necessarily help me
19 dictate my destiny.

20 Unfortunately, I was able to get bailed out.
21 However, I don't want no one else to suffer through
22 the same experiences that I have been through or
23 perhaps even worse that other have been through.

24 In conclusion, I feel reassured if the City
25 Council will vote in support of this plan to close

2 Rikers forever and provide more support and funds to
3 restorative justice and alternatives to incarceration
4 like I was.

5 I would like to leave you with an important
6 paraphrase, Two Pock once described his thug life
7 acronym to mean, the hate you give to little infants
8 f's everyone. With Rikers Island closing we will be
9 deviating from the hate we give and serve much needed
10 compassion, care and concern for our emerging youth.

11 The love we show today will return by tomorrow.
12 Conversely, the opposite applies equally as well.

13 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you.

14 AKEEM SHAMAL POWELL: Thank you for allowing me
15 to testify.

16 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you very much.

17 EDGER ASETTEOPAN: Good evening honorable City
18 Council Members, activists and my people from the
19 neighborhood. My name is Edger Aseteopan, I am 20
20 years old and I am a graduate from Exalt Youth
21 Organization.

22 I am here to tell you that I support this plan to
23 close Rikers and to invest in alternatives to young
24 people being incarcerated. I will tell you a quote
25 that Oprah Winfrey said at her 2007 commencement

2 speech. This will resemble my story of my journey in
3 the transformation of a new me.

4 Sometimes you find out what you are supposed to
5 be doing, by doing the things that you aren't
6 supposed to be doing.

7 My story of me being able to stand here and being
8 able to talk in front of you, all starts the day I
9 was standing on trial for accidentally assaulting an
10 undercover police officer.

11 During my first few visits to court; things
12 weren't looking so great for me. I already had a
13 history of misdemeanors, nothing really major but I
14 was still - I was looking already at a one year to
15 three years in jail. Luckily, thanks to my age and
16 the date of which such action took place, I was given
17 my last and final chance. I was given the choice to
18 attend an alternative program Exalt Youth.

19 Fortunately, I was given the chance to make the
20 most of my situation and turn my life around and
21 that's exactly what I did.

22 I am now currently back in high school. I was
23 supposed to start on my first day today, but instead
24 I am here making a voice. I am planning on attending
25 college, John Jay. That's my main goal right now.

3 Sorry, give me a second. I am also, thanks to
4 Exalt Youth, I am now working at a pay internship and
5 plan of staying out of the system for good.

6 My story is an example of why we should close
7 Rikers and support opening community-based
8 facilities.

9 Imagine if someone like me would have been sent
10 to Rikers. I would not be here standing and speaking
11 to you. I would have been there doing dumb things.
12 My environment changed once I was given this chance.
13 Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you so much.
15 Congratulations on all of your accomplishments by the
16 way.

17 EDGER ASETTEOPAN: Thank you very much.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: And I would just like to
19 add how I visited Exalt last year and just how amazed
20 and moved I am at all the work that you are all
21 doing. So, I want to thank you.

22 EDGER ASETTEOPAN: Thank you very much.

23 MICHAEL EDELMAN: Good evening, my name is
24 Michael Edelman. I am a member of the dismantling
25 racism team at Congregation Beth Elohim in Park Slope
Brooklyn.

2 I support the closing of Rikers Island, it's
3 replacement by smaller more humane neighborhood
4 jails, and development of the Island. Rikers Island
5 is brutal, spirit crushing and inhumane.

6 When I visited Rikers Island for voter
7 registration, the building I was in went on lockdown
8 three separate times. A completely unperturbed
9 officer commented that this was normal. A normal
10 part I would add of a systemically racist and unjust
11 system.

12 Many inmates are violent and dangerous people,
13 some of the guards also commit acts of violence.
14 Violence and the insure lurk there, violence breeds
15 and festers there, but many of the accused awaiting
16 trial are actually innocent and harmless people.
17 Remember, when you save one person, you save a world.
18 There are thousands in Rikers right now, what will we
19 do about that? What will we do about them?

20 Maintaining Rikers does a terrible disservice to
21 all involved; the inmates, their families, the
22 guards. An outrageous disservice and expensive,
23 whether measured in blood and pain, fear and
24 degradation, the crime of Rikers Island is committed

2 against human dignity and mankind. The unmeasurable
3 sin of Rikers Island is committed against God.

4 So, close Rikers Island now. Invest in humanity,
5 replace it with smaller, more humane neighborhood
6 jails that will provide settings for education and
7 treatment, job training, rehabilitation and maybe
8 even a little sunlight. The time is now, thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you so very much panel.
10 Thank you very much for your testimony.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Everybody, I'm Council
12 Member Steve Levin, I am taking over for Chair Adams
13 for a few moments.

14 The next panel, Stephanie Garola from No New
15 Jails, sorry Sophia Garule from No New Jails, Katelyn
16 Noss from NYU Prison Education Program, Jenaki Ji
17 from DRUM, Dypena Chechri from DRUM, Sarang
18 Chebon[SP?] from DRUM and Terrick[SP?] Brown.

19 Okay, whoever wants to begin.

20 SOPHIA GURULE: My name is Sophia Gurule, I am a
21 public defender in Mott Haven and a resident of East
22 Harlem. Council Member Ayala represents me in the
23 City Council here today.

24 I am here to say as her constituent, that I
25 firmly reject the building of new jails and I am

2 deeply upset by her lack of engagement with her
3 constituents.

4 Beyond the obvious facts that caging Black and
5 Brown people is white supremacy in action and jail
6 building can literally never be called radical
7 decarceration. The City Council must reject the
8 ULURP application for two practical reasons.

9 The first is that under the current proposal,
10 there is no legal guarantee to close Rikers. This is
11 particularly alarming where DOC is on record saying
12 that incarcerated people in the current borough-based
13 jails will be sent to Rikers during the ten years it
14 takes to build new jails.

15 So, let's be clear, this plan will increase the
16 number of people on Rikers without any legally
17 binding guarantee to get them off of Rikers. The
18 plan does the exact opposite of what it says it will
19 do.

20 The second reason is that the data that the
21 Mayor's Office is using to call this a decarceration
22 plan is fundamentally flawed. The city keeps saying
23 that closing Rikers without new jails is impossible
24 because it can't reduce the city's jail population to
25 3,000 by 2026. Even though MOCJ has publicly stated

2 that the city is way ahead of schedule to
3 significantly reduce the jail population. Judge
4 Lippman here today, said that the city expects the
5 jail population to be reduced to 4,000 by 2026.

6 So, according to the city's own calculations,
7 there is now a difference of 1,000 people preventing
8 them from closing Rikers without building new jails.

9 New York City's jail population consists of
10 people with technical parole violations, people with
11 serious mental health diagnoses, people serving less
12 than one-year sentences, and people held in on bail.

13 So, when the city says that we can't close Rikers
14 without new jails, what they are saying is that they
15 are building billion-dollar jails because the Mayor
16 and this City Council can't be expected to do the
17 work to get 1,000 people off of jails or invest in
18 communities to prevent the circumstances that cause
19 their incarceration.

20 Finally, the City's Council job is to represent
21 the people who voted you into the seats that you are
22 sitting in right now. This plan affects all of New
23 York City. Member deference cannot apply in this
24 circumstance. It's offensive to all New Yorkers that
25 people at this table right now, including you Council

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING AND 421
MARITIME USES

2 Member Levin are pushing for member deference. Do
3 you job, close Rikers now, no new jails.

4 UNIDENTIFIED: [Inaudible 3:30:28].

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: I am sorry, you have to
6 turn on the microphone.

7 **SPEAKER SPEAKING IN DIFFERENT LANGUAGE**

8 **[3:30:32-3:33:29]**

9 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you.

10 [03:34:10 - 03:34:24] It is easy to say but more
11 difficult to suffer. I want to say something like, I
12 was like -

13 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you.

14 Come here, I am really sick, and I have no use to
15 my left side of my body. My dad said like -

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Sorry, if I can interrupt
17 can maybe your testimony be translated to -

18 UNIDENTIFIED: Council Member, that's what I am
19 going to do.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay, so, we will allow
21 for an additional two minutes for you.

22 UNIDENTIFIED: I will read it out loud now in
23 English for her.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay, thank you.
25

2 JONA KYRIE: So, my name is Jonna Kyrie, I live
3 in Elmhurst Queens, I am 15 years old. I came from
4 Nepal three years ago and I go to International High
5 School.

6 I am a member of DRUM, Desis Rising Up and
7 Moving. We organize low income, South Asian, Indo-
8 Caribbean communities on immigrant worker, racial,
9 education and gender justice.

10 I am survivor of domestic violence. In the past
11 few years I have been physically, emotionally and
12 verbally abused by my parents.

13 Three weeks ago, I was on the verge of becoming
14 homeless, looking for a shelter, finding the
15 resources to support me when I was unstable to take
16 care of myself was close to impossible.

17 As a 15 years old, I am not eligible to stay in a
18 shelter. There was not a single foster home that
19 speaks the language I do. I was sent from one agency
20 to another looking for housing, legal and mental
21 health support. I am still looking for a mental
22 health counselor.

23 If there were resources in my school or
24 neighborhood that could help mediate what I going
25 through with my parents, maybe I would not be

2 knocking on doors of shelters and foster care system.

3 Why are we not talking about physical and mental
4 health of people like me? Why are there not enough
5 resources spent on people like me for our future?

6 Many of the people who want to vote for this plan
7 to build new jails, always like to say they want to
8 protect a domestic violent victims and survivors like
9 myself, but do not seem to care about what I actually
10 need in the community to be protected. I need you to
11 vote no on spending \$11 million to lock our people.

12 I need you to spend \$11 billion on preventing
13 domestic violence from happening in the first place.

14 I need you to spend \$11 billion on preventing
15 homelessness of young women escaping violence at
16 home. I need you to spend the \$11 billion on more
17 interpreters and translations in all languages for
18 the immigrant women who are seeking city services.

19 I need you to spend \$11 billion on building more
20 schools instead of jails. Our city's focus needs to
21 be prevention, not prisons.

22 No new jails, please.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you. We're happy to
24 assist you through the Council with any of the issues

2 that we can. So, maybe after this testimony we will
3 make sure that staff is coordinated with you.

4 JONA KYRIE: [SPEAKING IN DIFFERENT LANGUAGE
5 3:38:42- my parents doesn't stop hurting me. I hurt
6 in [03:38:51-3:39:13]. Please support me. [crying]

7 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: We will help you ever way
8 that we can.

9 JONA KYRIE: [SPEAKING IN DIFFERENT LANGUAGE]

10 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you, thank you.

11 JONA KYRIE: Please support me, support us, don't
12 support the jail, please.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you, thank you,
14 thank you. Thank you very much, thank you.

15 DYPENA CHECHRI: Okay, hello, good evening to
16 all. My name is Dypena Chechri and I am 16 years
17 old. I am from Internationalized School for Health
18 Sciences. I am living in Queens for two years and I
19 have been a member of DRUM for one and half years.
20 DRUM stands for Desis Rising up and Moving and we
21 organize low income South Asian and Indo Caribbean
22 communities.

23 I want to ask City Council why we are spending
24 \$11 billion for new jails. But we are not using that
25 money on really needed places, like our schools on

2 extra classes and free tuition for colleges. My
3 school doesn't have money to by increments for our
4 activities.

5 For the last two years when I was in astronomy
6 class, we had to ride the train for one hour to
7 another location just to use telescopes.

8 As the immigrants, I also want to go to better
9 college, but I am worried about paying higher
10 tuitions. New York City is 65 percent people of
11 color which includes immigrant communities. It is a
12 huge problem for Black and Brown people that the city
13 wants to use \$11 billion to build four new jails.

14 We need to use that money so we can have
15 counselors in our schools, not more police and more
16 prisons. As an immigrant, when we see police, we
17 don't feel safe. We get worried that we are going to
18 get our back searched and give things to detention
19 center or be sent to there. If there will be new
20 jails, they will try to fill up those empty cells and
21 as we know, cops mainly target Black and Brown
22 people.

23 We deserve better than jails. We should be
24 ending the root causes of problem, not putting money
25 into more jails. Thank you.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you very much for
3 your testimony.

4 SARANG CHEBON: Good evening, my name is Sarang
5 Chebon, I am an immigrant from Nepal, and I am a
6 student at International High School for Health
7 Sciences. I am also a member of DRUM, Desis Rising up
8 and Moving which organizes 4,500 South Asian and
9 Indo-Caribbean immigrants, workers, and youth in New
10 York City.

11 I want the city to spend \$11 billion on schools,
12 education and hospitals rather than spending money on
13 jails. I have a couple of friends that do not speak
14 English and struggles to understand what is being
15 taught in school. We should invest in interpreters
16 in our school, so my friend can learn and have the
17 same amount of knowledge like other students.

18 The city should spend the money for free tuition
19 and after school programs. This money can go to so
20 many more things like improving our subways, housing,
21 job programs, hospitals, the least of what our
22 community needs is endless. And if you ask anyone in
23 our city, what do they think the city should spend
24 \$11 billion on, no one would say for four more
25 prisons.

2 Everyone would list a lot of things I said today.
3 I don't want our City Council Members to help Mayor
4 Bill de Blasio to build more jails in NYC to lock up
5 immigrants, young people, poor people and people of
6 color. Investing \$11 billion to build four new jails
7 in NYC is not investing in our communities. It's
8 actually stealing money away from the things our
9 communities need.

10 Investing \$11 billion into four jails is stealing
11 away our communities future. If you as City Council
12 Members vote yes on the Mayor's plan to lock up our
13 communities then you are just as guilty and as much
14 of a [inaudible 3:45:32] for our communities future.
15 Thank you.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you very much for
17 your testimony. Thank you.

18 UNIDENTIFIED: [03:45:44-3:45:54] CROWD CHANTING

19 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: We've just been informed,
20 just for the record by Sergeant at Arms, that there
21 are not people outside currently trying to get
22 inside.

23 So, I will go out and check myself. I am going
24 to turn it back over to our Chair and I'll go confirm
25 that.

2 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you. Thank you,
3 Council Member Levin. I see everybody is still
4 awake, that's good.

5 Richard Wonomo[SP?], Kelly Smith, Judith Pasco,
6 Marie Fuchs, Katlyn Greco, Valatina[SP?] Jones,
7 Carolyn Cohen or Cowen, Susan Miller, Bill Mitchell,
8 Rabbi David Adelson, Tina Tymon Just Leadership and
9 Joe, Black Youth Project 100, Joe, are you here?
10 Jeremy Levenson, Natalie, it's either Devine or
11 Perrine, Natalie, Nitta Bomonie[SP?], Cynthia Yow,
12 Sarah Kline, Naeem Aslam, Andrew Shapira, Nasar
13 Bouyon, Hannah Black, Diana Kolavetta[SP?], Calvin
14 Micelle Nelson, Commie Dominguez, Rose Asaf,
15 Zakea[SP?], Carolyn Yow.

16 MARIE FUCHS: Hi, my name is Marie Fuchs, I was
17 born and raised in Astoria Queens, I am a member of
18 the close Rikers Campaign and I have been a member
19 since September of 2016. This work has been done
20 before me coming in, before people that are in this
21 room coming in.

22 So, whoever is here right now, I give very little
23 to the conversation, there has been plenty of
24 community engagement and if anything, it's an insult.
25 It's an insult for you to come in here and tell other

2 people what plans you want in place when we've been
3 putting in work for such a long time and I am going
4 to tell you one thing, at the end of the day, half
5 the people here that are wanting community engagement
6 aren't even from the community.

7 Sorry guys, but coming from Kansas, Philly, Iowa,
8 and being a political science major and having no
9 plan, having no plan whatsoever, right, wanting to
10 abolish and getting to the same place that we want to
11 be at too. Guess what, those things don't happen
12 unless you have a plan in place. And I am sorry
13 that I am not addressing the things that I really
14 should be addressing more so, is that at the end of
15 day the height of the facility and our land use is
16 one thing, but it's very upsetting to know that the
17 people that try to align themselves with the same
18 message have no idea what they are agreeing to. Have
19 absolutely no idea, no understanding whatsoever of
20 the work that everybody outside of you guys just
21 coming in five, six, seven, whatever.

22 At the end of the day, there have been a lot of
23 people who have been discriminated against in the
24 system, who have been directly impacted and I'm going
25 to tell you straight up, at the end of the day, I

2 have mental health issues, mental illness, whatever
3 the hell you want to call it, right. You are going
4 to tell me that you are going to try to take a
5 service away from somebody. Because you know what,
6 when you are admitted to a hospital, they ask you
7 three questions. Are you a threat to anybody else?
8 Are you a danger to yourself? Are you a danger to
9 your community?

10 I am going to tell you, at the end of the day, if
11 you are a legitimate threat to yourself, your doing
12 everybody a disservice by telling them that they
13 don't need the services that they need. And I think
14 that we should be voting in favor of the borough-
15 based plan and the fact that you guys come here and
16 being disruptive and disrespectful, it's an insult.
17 It's all an image and it's disingenuous. And it's
18 sad, it's filthy, it's horrible.

19 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you for your testimony.

20 UNIDENTIFIED: Hi.

21 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Turn on your microphone.

22 TINA TYMON: Okay, my name is Tina Tymon and I am
23 here to urge you to vote yes on this proposal.

24 I was in and out of Rikers at least twenty times
25 because I had drug related offences and being housed

2 in subhuman accommodations, mice, water bugs, showers
3 with horrific mold, and being monitored by petty,
4 immature, disgruntled officers, it created a savage
5 because every time I was released, I would then use
6 an excessive amount of drugs to compensate for the
7 way I felt while on Rikers.

8 People are isolated and forgotten about on Rikers
9 Island. I received visits, but those slowly dwindled
10 down because the people that come to see you are
11 subjected to an all-day clown show, where the
12 officers are really aggressive. They treat the
13 visitors the same as they treat the people locked up
14 there because on the flip side, I visited people as
15 well. But the City Council needs to fund
16 alternatives to incarceration. People with drug
17 problems, people with mental health problems, they
18 need to be offered treatment. Jail sentences did
19 nothing to stop my drug problem.

20 Those who are detained need to be held – you know
21 those that are detained, need to be housed in
22 facilities with conditions that are fit for humans,
23 because Rikers doesn't offer that.

24 Please, vote yes on this proposal. Thank you,
25 vote yes.

2 JOE: Hi, my name is Joe, I will be speaking on
3 behalf of Black Youth Project 100 in opposition to
4 the new jail or pro-jail plan.

5 Many speakers are promoted today the false
6 pragmatic binary that we either accept Rikers or we
7 accept \$10 billion to create four new jails in every
8 borough, say for Staten Island alongside a nonbinding
9 commitment to close Rikers nearly a decade from now.

10 Oddly enough, to these people it seems utopian to
11 make a principle call for the end of Rikers alongside
12 a refusal of the creation of any new cages.

13 Some history may help us in clarifying why the
14 new jail plan is simultaneously entirely unrealistic
15 and sadistic. As many of us recognize, American
16 prisons have long had an intimate link to the racist
17 and exploitate of logic of slavery, but we do not
18 need to start so far back.

19 Mass incarceration, the expansion of the
20 incarcerated population from 300,000 to just over 2
21 million began in the 1970's. As a civil rights
22 movement and the racial liberation movements forced
23 reforms that enabled formal integration into the
24 welfare and that the state so consistently denied to
25 Native, Black and Brown people before. The state

2 retracted jobs, housing and redistribution program
3 and forced cataclysmic austerity and shipped its
4 racist exploitation abroad.

5 Starting almost immediately, the programs of this
6 country that offered some modicum of aid and health
7 were replaced with cages for people to stay no longer
8 viewed as useful for their profit.

9 Black, Brown, transgender, nonbinary and migrant
10 communities who inclusion in the American society had
11 threaded that structure that had held it up. We were
12 all swallowed up in cages.

13 This country then proceeded to build up a
14 parasitic punitive geography prisons, jails, mental
15 asylums, correctional facilities, detention centers
16 and migration camps.

17 Rikers is only an exceptional product of the
18 prison culture we have. Every new jail that is built
19 will be filled as they have around the world time and
20 time again over the past few hundred years.

21 I wish to offer one more small history lesson.
22 The Ku Klux Klan as a White power paramilitary
23 operated in ways that the respected suvin gentry
24 could not because they lost confidence in the power
25

2 of suvinex confederate governments to sustain White
3 Power.

4 If the new jails plan succeeds and I mean this
5 with all due respect, then New York State and New
6 York City can rest assure that they will not need the
7 clan, having instead it's unholy trinity of the NYPD,
8 the Department of Corrections, and their snake oil
9 salesman and governmental and nongovernmental
10 organizations. Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERON ADAMS: Thank you.

12 NASEEM ASLAM: Greetings everybody, my name is
13 Naeem Aslam, I live in Jackson Heights Queens and I
14 have been living in Queens since 2002, when at the
15 age of nine I came to the US as an immigrant. I
16 don't know if that qualifies me, according to some
17 folks standards, to be a New Yorkers, but I consider
18 myself a New Yorker and I am from here.

19 I want to first begin by saying that you know, a
20 lot of my work in the community is addressing the
21 intersections of the immigration system and the
22 criminal justice system. As many before me have
23 mentioned the impact there new jails will have on our
24 immigrant communities, I won't repeat their words.
25 But I also want to acknowledge that the fact that

2 we're having this conversation right now about
3 closing Rikers is because of the work, decades of
4 work, people impacted by Rikers, people hurt by
5 Rikers have done. People that are continued to hurt
6 by Rikers are doing. That's why we're having this
7 conversation and it's about time that the city
8 listens and shuts down Rikers.

9 But replacing Rikers with four new jails is not
10 the way to do it. This is a false choice, as many
11 others have said, this is a false choice that is
12 being put on us, put on our communities by the city.
13 This is a false choice that the City Council is
14 upholding through this process.

15 We can have mental health support, we can have
16 rehabilitation, we can have medical support and any
17 kind of material needs without jails. As others have
18 mentioned before, how you vote on this issue will be
19 your legacy. It's your choice whether you want to be
20 remembered as furthering mass incarceration or not.

21 Shut down Rikers, don't invest in jails, invest
22 in people. And last thing I want to add, is that if
23 you cannot imagine a world without jails, try harder
24 and when you can, we'll be here.

25 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you.

2 UNIDENTIFIED: Also, don't align me with racism
3 ever again. I am not racist at all and don't ever
4 think that. It's completely ridiculous for you to
5 even come at me with some shit like that.

6 NASEEM ASLAM: Watch your mouth please.

7 UNIDENTIFIED: I wasn't still talking about the
8 White people in here, the political science -

9 CHAIRPERON ADAMS: Thank you, thank you, thank
10 you, sir, please go on with your testimony. Thank
11 you very much. We're sorry for the disrespect.

12 UNIDENTIFIED: Please don't call me sir.

13 UNIDENTIFIED: I am issuing this statement of
14 behalf of Carolyn Yow.

15 I am a lifelong New Yorker and currently an
16 educator at CUNY. I oppose the borough-based jail
17 plan and believe Rikers should be closed yesterday.
18 I do not think the way to close Rikers is to open
19 four new skyscraper jails.

20 I don't believe that the same system that cheats
21 people out of livable housing, education, access to
22 food and healthcare is the same system that is
23 interested in rehabilitating. And even more, I don't
24 think the same system which profits from private
25 contracts to prison construction and food, as well as

2 the contracting of prison workers for pennies an hour
3 is trying to decarcerate.

4 It certainly does not care about the dignity of
5 people's lives. Four more prisons means four more
6 revolving doors on cages with a system that wants to
7 dispose of Black and Brown people just living their
8 lives. More prisons means more places to put people
9 who commit crimes of survival, more room for people
10 in for bail they cannot afford, or sometimes don't
11 even know the amount of. More room to keep people
12 just waiting trial, which is most of Rikers by the
13 way.

14 We do not need friendly neighborhood jails with a
15 Starbucks underneath, especially since the same
16 racist CO's will be running them. It's not the
17 shape, name or location of the jail but about the
18 system.

19 History tells us everything, the testimonies from
20 the formerly incarcerated community members today
21 also tell us the city has never batted an eye at the
22 level of neglect and abuse in jails. Rikers was once
23 advertised as the most humane jail in it's day as
24 well.

2 Why would we believe that the city would take
3 input on new borough-based jails when they won't end
4 the human rights abuses happening right here and now.
5 To reiterate what so many have said before, we need
6 real commitments toward the future. That means
7 money, \$11 billion at least to tackling the crises of
8 NYCH aid repair and schools not having enough
9 supplies, programs and teachers, just to name a few.
10 Vote no on this jail expansion plan.

11 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you, thank you panel
12 for your testimony.

13 Nabeel Hussein, Charlie Lai, Nusrat Zeba, Erin
14 Nurap[SP?] Fernando, Albert Saint Joan, Rosalie
15 Henderson, James Henderson, and Jose Saldana.

16 Ladies and gentleman, we have gone through all of
17 the appearance cards, if you wish to testify and have
18 not, this is your final opportunity to do so. Please
19 fill out an appearance card. If not, this is our
20 final panel of the evening.

21 Panel, please remember to state your name. You
22 may begin when you are ready.

23 JOSE SALDANA: My name is Jose Saldana; I am the
24 Director of the Release Aging People in Prison
25 Campaign. A grassroot community organizing campaign.

3 I am also formerly incarcerated. Roughly twenty
4 months ago, I was released from State prison after
5 serving close to 40 years in prisons throughout the
6 State of New York and contrary to what you might have
7 heard today. There are no good prisons. Jails,
8 prisons, and correctional facilities are cruel,
9 inhumane and oppressive places. They are an
10 extension of slavery. They destroy and tie
11 communities and the lives of all those entangled in
12 them. They do not keep us safe.

13 Prisons and jails are also part of a system
14 designed to neutralize the system to racism and
15 systemic injustice and have caused irreparable harm
16 to Black and Brown people nationwide, as a
17 fundamental principle.

18 RAP, the release aging people in prison opposes
19 prisons, jails, and a criminal legal system rooted in
20 retribution, revenge and perpetual punishment. The
21 plan to close Rikers Island and build new borough-
22 based jails constitute nothing more than a transfer
23 of torture and the continuation of mass
24 incarceration.

25 Billions of dollars that could and should be used
to address our city's lack of affordable housing,

2 adequate healthcare and strong community programs is
3 instead being offered to further warehouse our
4 people. RAP opposes jails and prisons of all shapes
5 and sizes and demand that Rikers be immediately and
6 permanently closed.

7 We demand that the City Planning Committee vote
8 against a New York City borough-based jail plan and
9 instead vote to serve the interest of the people
10 instead of serving the interest of capitalism and
11 slavery. Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: And I do commend RAP. I
13 commend RAP for all of the work that that
14 organization has done throughout the years.

15 JOSE SALDANA: Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you.

17 CHARLIE LAI: Hi, my name is Charlie Lai, I am
18 the Director of Chung Pak, the building that
19 physically shares a common wall with the Manhattan
20 Detention Center.

21 37 years ago, 12,000 Chinatown residents
22 protested against the city's plan to build another
23 jail there. The city ignored the community and built
24 it anyway. The proposed 450-foot jail will most
25 directly and severely impact us.

2 The massive replacement would be three times
3 taller than our 13-story building and overshadow
4 every other building in the area. This jail could
5 wreak havoc and lasting damage to our senior citizens
6 housing project, day care center, health clinic and
7 fourteen small businesses.

8 We are truly afraid that the proposed demolition
9 and construction could threaten and/or damage the
10 physical stability and the foundation of a building
11 complex. But more importantly, we are greatly
12 concerned about the psychosocial, physical health and
13 safety of our 105 low income seniors who will be
14 sited in our building.

15 Our building complex meets the diverse needs of
16 the neighborhood. We are a vital asset to the social
17 economic wellbeing of the extended Chinatown area.
18 We of course, want to make sure our building complex
19 and our seniors are protected. We sincerely
20 appreciate the many city agencies, the council staff,
21 Council Member Chin, Borough President Brewer's
22 active support and attention but we are an integrated
23 community. We cannot exist without all of our
24 neighbors ability to thrive.

2 This new jail impacts our entire neighborhood.
3 Tribeca, SoHo, Little Italy and Chinatown. All of
4 our voices and needs must be heard and addressed.
5 Chinatown supports the elimination of the inhumane
6 conditions at Rikers; however, it is a huge mistake
7 to immediately rush to pass the jails plan without
8 better population number, the specific program's
9 needs, the jails design, the environmental impacts
10 and its true financial cost and a publicly articulate
11 mitigation plan for Chinatown and the other sites.

12 The City Council must lead a stronger citywide
13 engagement and democratic process. It is smart
14 planning and responsible governance. Thank you.

15 NABEEL HUSSEIN: Peace to those willing to fight
16 for it. My name I is Nabeel Hussein and I am one of
17 the organizers of No New Jails NYC.

18 My reasons for saying no new jails are too many
19 to fit in the paltry two minutes, that we get in this
20 absurd ULURP process, so today surrounded by
21 portraits of the White Supremacist slave holders who
22 enslaved my ancestors and perpetrated genocide
23 against the Native people of this land, and their
24 lying ass quotes about equality, I will just go ahead
25 and confine my remarks to land use.

2 The land use process at this settler colonizer
3 government is to expand jails on stolen territory is
4 completely illegitimate. It is antidemocratic from
5 top to bottom.

6 For the City Council which holds ultimate power
7 in this process, to have just one hearing on the
8 first day of school, is just the latest example of
9 their obvious disregard for community input that does
10 not support their predetermined outcome.

11 But we showed up anyway to speak some basic
12 truths. Starting with the fact that this plan to
13 expand jails and leave Rikers open past your time in
14 office, has no guarantee that Rikers will close. I
15 am not sure why anyone believes one word from the
16 lying mouth of the Mayor who rehired Rudy Giuliani's
17 racist police commissioner, increased the police
18 budget by \$100 million to hire 1,300 more cops and
19 did nothing to hold accountable the police murderers
20 of Saheed Vassell, Duane June, Shantel Davis, and
21 more other Black folks just in my neighborhood that I
22 can name.

23 Now he is some criminal justice reformer. It's a
24 sick joke that would actually be funny if it might
25 not have generational consequences. This land use

2 proposal to build the tallest skyscraper jails in the
3 world would literally cement a future of
4 incarceration for New York City.

5 Rikers itself was opened as a reform and there is
6 no reason to believe that this latest attempt to
7 build a humane cage will turn out differently than
8 each other time it has failed. We already know that
9 modern jails in residential neighborhoods are also
10 torture chambers. Look at MDC without heat in the
11 winter. Look at the Brooklyn Detention Center, look
12 at the Tombs, the entire system has got to go, but
13 this jail expansion plan would only intrench it.

14 Let me close by saying, that the cowardice of
15 leader Corey Johnson and other Council Members
16 throughout this process will not soon be forgotten.
17 Just the other day, it was reported that you, Council
18 Member Stephen Levin tried to bully other Council
19 Members into falling into line with member deference
20 and then denied it after you got called lying on an
21 audio recording. But member deference will not save
22 you from being held accountable for your actions.

23 Reject this land use proposal and spend the money
24 on the real needs of our communities for education,
25 for housing including NYCHA repair, for healthcare

2 including mental healthcare. You need to shutdown
3 Rikers immediately and permanently without building
4 new cages that perpetuate the same harm.

5 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you.

6 NABEEL HUSSEIN: Close Rikers now and no new
7 jails.

8 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you very much.

9 ALBASENE GENE: Peace, my name is Albasene Gene.
10 I am an organizer with No New Jails and also with the
11 Black Alliance for Just Immigration. I am also a
12 descendant of Asian Freedom Fighters, but we didn't
13 kill our masses and burn down plantations to reform
14 plantations and make smaller ones. I just wanted to
15 get that out there and that especially goes for the
16 NEMBI folks who were saying no new jails and trying
17 to right our way but still saying we should keep
18 Rikers open.

19 Get off it, because there is no way we're going
20 to reform a plantation, we want Rikers closed and we
21 want no new jails. And it's also ironic that today
22 you chose to have this on the first day of school.
23 It shows how like transparent you are with the
24 community.

2 I guess this is what democracy looks like. It
3 shows your dedication to democracy. If you really
4 want to show your dedication of democracy, talk to
5 your constituents about this plan. Talk to people
6 who are directly impacted, who have been in Rikers
7 Island, but not people who are involved with either
8 of our campaigns. Not people that are involved with
9 No New Jails or Close Rikers. Go out to the
10 community and talk to people about this plan and see
11 what their reaction is. Because we did that, we have
12 it on video.

13 When we talked about the city could do with \$11
14 billion after closing Rikers, nobody, nobody said new
15 jails. Everybody said, all the same things that
16 we're all saying here now. We need more mental
17 health resources, we need more counselors in our
18 schools, we need more things for our youth, we need
19 to invest in NYCHA. It's asinine to me that at the
20 same moment that we're privatizing NYCHA, claiming
21 that we don't have the money for it, and essentially
22 privatizing a third of it yet we are spending \$11
23 billion for new jails.

24 And I seen the charge for the projected expenses
25 for the capital funds in the next ten years. The new

2 jails outpace everything, everything. That doesn't
3 make any sense, how are you decarcerating by pumping
4 \$10 billion into new jails.

5 That asinine to me and also, just real quick,
6 having gone to immigration court, I see it's not
7 about just the bars and the mortar that goes into the
8 Rikers, it's the system itself, that feeds people
9 into the deportation pipeline and the school to
10 prison pipeline. This is what we need to address,
11 how people get in there in the first place. Thank
12 you.

13 ROSALIE HENDERSON: Hello Council people, my name
14 is Rosalie. I study health promotion in behavioral
15 sciences, and I am a community advocate.

16 I firmly object the plan to build four new jails
17 in each borough. How many of us actually know the
18 history of how Rikers came to be? Rikers was named
19 for a magistrate Richard Riker of course esquire who,
20 just a little bit about him. His contemptable side
21 gig included a rubber stamping from his judges bench.
22 The paperwork that allowed free Black men, women and
23 children to be kidnapped off the streets of New York
24 City and trafficked down south to slaves.

2 I want to remind everyone in this room that
3 Council Members currently receive \$148,500 a year in
4 based salary, which the Council people themselves
5 increased from \$112,000 back in early 2016. How can
6 the people who are charged with representing our
7 communities have missed the mark so blatantly. Many
8 of you have been supposed the tireless advocates for
9 the rights of senior citizens, advocates of putting
10 an end to gun violence and securing housing for
11 marginalized people, yet you seem to be unaware of
12 the jarring statistics around criminalization of
13 Black and Brown people in New York State.

14 To sort of echo what Jose from RAP was saying
15 earlier, the number of people age 50 and older in New
16 York incarcerated has doubled since 2000. It now
17 exceeds 10,000, which is about 20 percent of the New
18 York State prison population. This obviously
19 reflects a crisis in our prison system and an
20 extension of the culture of revenge and punishment
21 into all areas of our society.

22 And scientist, any person who has been in a
23 psychology class knows the results of the Milgrom
24 experiment which is that punishment does not work.
25 All Council Members have this golden opportunity to

2 end cycles of violence and poverty once and for all.

3 Many of the people on City Council, yourself included

4 Diana are familiar with the issues of city poverty,

5 homelessness, violence and gentrification, yet you

6 all are standing in a very, very particular position

7 to end the deaths and abuse of many, many people in

8 the system.

9 New York failed Layleen Polanco, a Black

10 transgender African Latinx woman who died at Rikers

11 due to complications with her epilepsy. New York

12 failed Kalief Browder, excuse me. He should not have

13 been charged as an adult or had prosecutors,

14 defenders and judges so overwhelmed with cases that

15 he waited three years for trial.

16 Excuse me, he should not have spent one day being

17 abused by guards. Thank you, those of you who are

18 making direct eye contact with me right now and

19 others who are incarcerated there.

20 Council people

21 stand on the right side of history. Do the right

22 thing, use the money – use the \$11 billion to do what

23 is right for our community, us who voted you into

24 these positions, what we want, what every person in

25 this room wants.

2 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you.

3 Do not continue the legacy of Chattel slavery,
4 Jim Crow, and magistrate Rikers in keeping this jail
5 open. Close Rikers now, no new jails. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you very much.

7 JAMES HENDERSON: My name is James Henderson and
8 I wholeheartedly oppose this plan to incarcerate more
9 of my neighbors, friends and family. To claim that
10 this plan is the only way to close Rikers Island is
11 to believe that societal change can only come about
12 if it is given to us incrementally by the ruling
13 class.

14 By these wheeling and dealing government
15 officials who expected their jail expansion plan to
16 be a done deal before the abolitionist and Marxists
17 showed up. These officials cannot be trusted when
18 they say that they will close Rikers once the new
19 jails are built. These officials cannot be trusted
20 when they say that the new jails will be humane.
21 These officials who make \$148,500 a year cannot even
22 be trusted to show up to their own meetings.

23 We have to dream bigger and beyond this lose,
24 lose situation presented to us and our city. If
25 these jails are built, we will only find ourselves

2 attempting to reform the human rights abuses therein
3 later down the road.

4 The indiscriminate inhumanity of the prison
5 industrial complex is by design, not by accident.
6 Why, because capitalist profit by caging the working
7 class, especially Black and Brown people. The only
8 way to ensure that the cesspool of abuse, Rikers
9 Island is shuttered for good with no new jails, is to
10 demand it at every turn.

11 Demand \$11 billion for schools, housing,
12 healthcare. Demand a better future, no new jails for
13 New York City.

14 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you all very much for
15 your very passionate testimony. I really appreciate
16 it, thank you.

17 And we do have one more panel. We are going to
18 call up Amy Tong, Alex, Matteo Tabares[SP?] and
19 Joslyn. This will be our final panel of the evening
20 ladies and gentlemen.

21 Panel, I welcome you, I congratulate you for
22 making through to being our final panel of the
23 evening. So, please state your name and you may
24 begin.

2 AMY TONG: Hi, my name is Amy Tong and I live in
3 Williamsburg in Council Member Reynoso's District and
4 I work as a teen health educator in Chinatown in
5 Council Member Chin's District.

6 So, let me tell you about my day. Today, I went
7 to work, I talked to a bunch of teens about nutrition
8 and exercise, gender and sexuality, STI's, birth
9 control. We are having these kinds of conversations
10 that they don't get in their schools. That they
11 don't get in jails and then I came over here to try
12 to come to the City Hall and I waited at line for an
13 hour for my lunch break, because they wouldn't let us
14 in and then I went back to work.

15 And I talked to more teens and then I came back
16 again just now and the cops outside told us that the
17 room was at capacity. So, there is a live stream
18 right now and for those who can't see on the live
19 stream, there are hundreds of seats open and for
20 those who like, the fact that there is a live stream
21 and you are telling us that there are no seats
22 available and this is like a very public thing. Why
23 should we trust you? Why should we trust the
24 Department of Corrections to institute better jail
25 system?

2 So, I am firmly against the creation of new jails
3 and I am in support of closing Rikers and both of
4 those things can happen at once.

5 As I was just saying, we have no reason to trust
6 the Department of Corrections. These new jails would
7 continue the inhumane use of solitary confinement and
8 it would do nothing to hold the DOC accountable for
9 the same violence they continue to commit at Rikers
10 and other jails around the city.

11 The land use application that we are discussing
12 today includes no concrete plan to close Rikers and
13 when we were standing outside, the people told us,
14 everyone inside wants to go home. Well, first, have
15 more hearings, talk to more people.

16 Second, everyone that you are keeping in these
17 cages, also want to go home and they have been
18 trapped there for years on bail and on everything
19 that should not be keeping them there. Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you.

21 MATTEO TABARES: Hi, good evening everyone, my
22 name is Matteo and I am a real estate man from New
23 York, in support of no new jails.

24 New York seeks to decriminalize the decarcerated
25 and destigmatize the sex traits in New York City and

2 State and work towards real safety for all people who
3 trade sex by choice, circumstance or [inaudible
4 4:35:23].

5 We recognize that the same communities are more
6 severely impacted by commercialization of sex traded
7 related offences are the same communities more
8 severely impacted by criminalization and
9 incarceration overall. People whoa are Black, Brown,
10 trans, queer, disabled, undocumented and experiencing
11 poverty and homeless.

12 Our communities need more resources, not more
13 policing and not more criminalization.

14 Criminalization and incarceration are ineffective
15 strategies for improving community safety. In fact,
16 by pushing the sex trade on the ground and making it
17 dangerous for those trading sex to access support and
18 resources, criminalization, incarceration exacerbate
19 trafficking and exploitation in the sex traits.

20 Further, criminalization creates barriers to
21 housing and alternative forms of employment and in
22 and of themselves jails and prisons are not safe,
23 neither are court tied diversion service as in
24 Layleen Polanco's case has shown us.

2 Her diversion into the human trafficking
3 intervention, court ultimately resulted in her death,
4 when bail was set on the original sex related charge
5 she received after she missed a court date.

6 And while sex related charges in New York City do
7 not account for the entirety of Rikers population,
8 for a significant number of our community members at
9 law enforcement use sex work as an excuse to stop and
10 frisk, harass and arrest people frequently profile
11 the sex workers often resulting in other charges that
12 lead to incarceration.

13 A current proposal before the New York City
14 Council will build for new four borough-based jails
15 without any guaranteed commitment to close Rikers
16 Island. This proposal fails to address the needs of
17 our communities and community more severely impacted
18 by violence and criminalization.

19 New York urges the City Council to listen to the
20 demands of no new jails movement to stop the
21 construction of new jails in New York City and
22 redirect \$11 billion in public funding away from jail
23 construction into our resources that build real
24 community safety. New York urges the City Council to

2 vote no on the proposal for a borough-based jail
3 system in New York City. Thank you.

4 ALEX Hi, my name is Alex, I live in Council
5 Member Robert Cornegy's District and I support
6 closing Rikers immediately without building new
7 jails.

8 The real questions being asked today aren't even
9 about land use and there not about closing Rikers
10 either. The questions being asked today are, should
11 we build more cages to put New Yorkers in and should
12 New York commit to continuing the violence of
13 incarceration and it's my strong believe that the
14 answer to both of those is no.

15 Building more jails is itself a violent act,
16 continuing to criminalize poverty and mental illness,
17 putting those in most need of support in cages
18 instead is violence. Holding people in jails before
19 they have even been tried for a crime is violence.

20 Brutalizing and traumatizing those who have
21 committed violence and then putting them back in
22 their communities with no resources is part of that
23 cycle of violence. Gate keeping mental health and
24 addiction services, so that they can only be accessed
25 inside jails is violence and to be clear, all of that

2 violence is disproportionately enacted on Black,
3 Brown and indigenous people of color.

4 The inherent violence of incarceration isn't
5 unique to Rikers and it won't end if new jails are
6 built. Today's, land use proposal doesn't even
7 provide a plan for closing Rikers, it's just a plan
8 to build four new jails.

9 Instead of spending \$11 million on human cages,
10 we have the opportunity to spend \$11 million on our
11 communities making sure those around us are housed,
12 fed and cared for whether that's health, mental
13 health, education services, everything that everybody
14 has suggested today.

15 You have the power and opportunity here to take a
16 major step towards ending incarceration and ending
17 that violence. Healthy communities are how we create
18 safety, prisons are not. No new jails.

19 JOSLYN: Hi everyone, can everyone hear me.
20 Okay, cool. Hi, my name is Joslyn, I am a member of
21 No New Jails and I am going to be reading a statement
22 from my comrade Asha who had to leave. It's really a
23 powerful speech, unfortunately the two-minute
24 timeframe we are given will not allow me to read the
25 entire thing, so I am going to read an excerpt.

2 Prison is a system set up to punish, torture,
3 victimize, and dehumanize people. America has the
4 highest number of incarceration in the whole world.
5 41 percent of juveniles are arrested by the time they
6 turn 23. Children as young as 13 years have been
7 sentenced to die in prison and our prisons violate
8 the international standard. Solitary confinement
9 increases instability and by international law, it's
10 considered torture.

11 The Mayor is claiming that he will close Rikers
12 in 2027, but we all know that in 2027, the Mayor will
13 not be in the office to close Rikers. The Mayor is
14 also currently spending over \$1 billion taxpayer
15 dollars to fix Rikers and what that implies is that
16 Rikers Island will still be open in 2027. And four
17 massive jails will be built to incarcerate Black and
18 Brown people.

19 The Mayor also claimed that closing Rikers is
20 only possible if he builds new jails, but the focus
21 should be to end the broken window policing which
22 prevent our people from going to jail.

23 We are here today to demand that the Mayor and
24 homelessness by using \$10 billion to house every
25 homeless person in New York City. We demand that the

2 Mayor strengthen NYCHA raising \$10 billion to repair
3 NYCHA and create high quality affordable and
4 sustainable housing for our community. We demand
5 that the Mayor transform mental health by building
6 holistic mental health facilities to conserve all New
7 Yorkers with \$10 billion.

8 As abolitionists, we are demanding that the Mayor
9 listen to everyone and make reforms that do not
10 increase funding, staffing, or legitimacy to prison
11 but work towards freeing everyone and we call for
12 massive community investment to address the needs of
13 our communities targeted by criminalization.

14 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you for your testimony.

15 JOSYLN: No new jails, not now, not ever.

16 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you very much for your
17 testimony panel. Thank you, all panelists.

18 Thank you, panel. Thank you to the
19 Administration that started us off with testimony
20 this morning. Thank you to my colleagues. Are there
21 any more members of the public who wish to testify on
22 these land use items? Seeing none, I now close
23 today's public hearing and these items are laid over.
24 I would like to thank all members of the public, my
25 colleagues, Council and Land Use Staff who are

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING AND
MARITIME USES

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2 attending today's hearing. This meeting is hereby

3 adjourned. [GAVEL]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date April 1, 2018