



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New York City Breaks Ground on a New Jail on Rikers Island



East Elmhurst, NY - At a groundbreaking ceremony today, the New York City Department of Correction (NYCDOC) and the New York City Department of Design and Construction (NYCDDC) began construction of a new \$594 million jail on Rikers Island with capacity for 1,500 beds including a 225-bed infirmary. The 620,000-square-foot facility, which will incorporate state-of-the-art correction features and sustainable design elements that make it suitable for LEED silver accreditation, is the keystone of the plan to upgrade DOC's overall physical plant and advance operational improvements.

“This is considered among the largest city projects in our century,” said Deputy Mayor Linda Gibbs. “It is a state-of-the-art facility that will ensure the safety of inmates, staff and our community.”

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“Building a new admissions jail is a first for New York City and an important step for the Department,” said DOC Commissioner Dora B. Schriro, who hosted the event along with DDC Commissioner David J. Burney and Deputy Mayor Gibbs. “Assessing each inmate’s needs and risks informs custody management and improves discharge planning and preparation, resulting in both safer jails and safer communities.”

“This project represents a new generation in the design and planning of correctional facilities. Corrections policy and new research have enabled designs that promote better conditions for both inmates and officers,” said DDC Commissioner Burney. “This new jail, designed by 1100 Architects and Ricci Greene Associates, will be secure, environmentally sustainable, and help lay the groundwork for inmates to re-enter their communities, which ultimately benefits us all.”

The new jail, which is expected to be completed by 2018, will include state-of-the-art corrections features. Drawing on evidence-based practice, the facility will provide a central point of admissions and intake for most male adult inmates remanded to DOC custody. This will allow for consistent, accurate evaluation of incoming inmates’ risk of recidivism and need for services, such as mental health or substance use treatment.

The result will be better, safer housing assignments and more effective access to services, such as the Department’s Individualized Correction Achievement Plan (I-CAN), a cutting edge re-entry program that connects highest-risk inmates with interventions designed to reduce their likelihood of committing new offenses.

In addition, the facility will incorporate the Direct Supervision model of supervision and minimize the need for inmate movements. Direct Supervision, which has been accepted as a best-practice nationally, allows officers to interact directly with the inmates to better monitor—and respond to—their behavior. Housing units will also provide inmates with immediate access to many services, such as meals, medication and counseling services. The new jail is designed to provide plenty of natural light and views to the outdoors, as well as acoustic dampening and air conditioning, all of which contribute to a calmer, quieter and safer environment.

DOC bed space capacity will not increase because of the new jail, since a number of ‘temporary’ structures—so-called “modular buildings” and “sprungs” constructed in the 1980s no longer suitable for habitation—will be demolished to make way for the facility. The new jail will include 512 single cells, 16 dormitories with 50 beds each, and 225 general infirmary beds. Inmates processed through the building’s intake unit will spend the first seven days in DOC custody in the jail, before being reassigned to a housing unit consistent with their assessed custody classification and related program requirements. Almost 10 percent of all people who come into DOC custody are released within 24 hours, and nearly 50 percent are released within the first seven days of arrival.

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Additional building features include a public lobby and areas for central control, administration, staff support, visitation, and health services—including outpatient, specialty and mental health clinics, as well as space for congregate programs and outdoor recreation and 200 additional parking spaces.

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CONTACT: Eldin Villafane, DOC, eldin.villafane@doc.nyc.gov, (718) 546-0898
Joe Soldevere, DDC, soldevejo@ddc.nyc.gov/Craig Chin, chincr@ddc.nyc.gov, 718-391-1641