

Subject: CITY INVESTS \$391 MILLION IN COMMUNITIES AND COMPREHENSIVE REFORMS TO THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM



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CITY INVESTS \$391 MILLION IN COMMUNITIES AND COMPREHENSIVE REFORMS TO THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

The investments are part of the plan to close Rikers Island and usher in a new era for New York City

NEW YORK—The City Council Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public Sitings and Dispositions and the Committee on Land Use voted on Wednesday to approve the plan to close the jails on Rikers Island and build four new borough-based facilities. Today, the plan will go before the full City Council for a vote, culminating a years-long effort propelled by the strong advocacy of the formerly incarcerated to shutter Rikers Island.

The vote occurs as Mayor de Blasio, Speaker Johnson and Council leadership agree to a wide-range of investments tied to the closure of Rikers totaling \$391 million dollars, including \$126 million in previously planned investments and \$265 million in new programming that will address the root causes of incarceration and help fundamentally reshape New York City’s criminal justice system going forward. These investments are being announced in detail for the first time today.

This massive decarceration effort establishes New York City as a leader in criminal justice reform and pioneer in ending mass incarceration. The number of New Yorkers entering jail has declined by nearly half in the past 6 years. The jail population has declined from 11,000 in 2014 to about 7,000 today, and is projected to be approximately 3,300 by 2026.

“When we pledged to close Rikers Island, we made a promise to transform a broken criminal justice system and give back to the communities that have experienced the effects of mass incarceration firsthand, said **Mayor de Blasio**. “By investing in neighborhoods and putting people on the path to success, we are making good and getting closer to a day where we’re the fairest, big city in America.”

“For far too long, this city’s answer to every societal problem was to throw people in jail. Because of that, we lost generations to mass incarceration, mostly young men of color. These investments are at the heart of our plan to close Rikers. We are investing \$391 million in our communities to not only reform our system, but also address the root causes of incarceration. This includes \$265 million in brand new spending for programming and capital projects, and is on top of the \$40 million increase in criminal justice spending this Council won in the FY20 budget in preparation of closing Rikers. I am proud of this plan, and grateful to my fellow Council Members, particularly Council Members Diana Ayala, Margaret Chin, Karen Koslowitz, and Stephen Levin, as well as Adrienne Adams, Chair of the Subcommittee of Landmarks, Keith Powers, Chair of the Criminal Justice

Committee, the de Blasio administration and the longtime advocates for their partnership in this joint effort to usher in a new era for New York City,” said **Council Speaker Corey Johnson**.

Reducing Incarceration through Prevention, Diversion, and Reentry

In its aim to provide safe and smart diversion from jail, the plan adds over \$71 million for alternatives to detention and incarceration and reforms to the Department of Correction, building on \$126 million in annual investments to reduce justice involvement, support communities, and make our justice system smaller, safer, and fairer.

Highlights of those investments and policy changes include:

- \$54 million expansion of pretrial services including Supervised Release, the City’s primary diversion program, which has prevented 15,000 people from entering jail since its inception in March 2016. This program will be expanded to become an option for people facing every type of criminal charge.
- \$17 million in new funds to expand and continue Alternatives to Incarceration programs that will now serve 7,300 people per year, which will reduce the number of people serving sentences in City jails.
- Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice will invest in a planning grant for The Imagining Project, a collaboration between the Brooklyn District Attorney Eric Gonzalez and the Columbia University Justice Lab, an organization whose long term mission is to create a plan for getting to zero incarceration and minimal convictions for youth age 25 and under. A similar effort with the Center for Court Innovation will create a community justice center to provide community-based programming in the Far Rockaways, with a focus on providing alternatives to arrest and incarceration and reducing recidivism post-incarceration.
- Building on the existing investment in in-custody programming and reentry services, the City is restructuring such services to ensure access to comprehensive social services and access to paid transitional employment post-release for everyone leaving City jails.
- Services to support incarcerated individuals facing medical and mental health issues, including: doubling the number of therapeutic treatment units in the jails, known as the Program for Accelerated Clinical Effectiveness, or PACE; expanded mental health discharge planning services; and a new program to help ensure continuity of medical care for those exiting City jails.
- Expanded programming for social and emotional learning to help school communities be more proactive in changing school culture and climate, with the goal to foster and maintain a supportive school environment while reducing conflict.
- Requiring every detention facility to have dedicated administrative space for community based providers as well as dedicated space for services and programming in every housing unit. Also requiring new trainings for correction officers, program staff, and healthcare staff to participate in together.
- Expanded pre-arraignment diversion that will allow more people to avoid prosecution and have their arrests sealed
- Increased funding to community-based restorative justice programming, with a particular focus on serious felony level cases that would otherwise result in detention and incarceration. This model will invest in community-based infrastructure in conjunction with the District Attorneys and courts.
- Commitment to build a Community Justice Fund through a public-private partnership managed by the Mayor’s Fund that would strengthen the fabric of community justice and safety by focusing on developing programming and policies for truly communities based investments.

Address the Root Causes of Incarceration Through Investments In Housing and Community-Based Mental Health Services

The City will increase the number of supportive and transitional housing units dedicated to serving people who are homeless, have health needs, and histories of justice involvement to 1,000

- In addition to the investment in expanding the Justice Impacted Supportive Housing (JISH) program from 120 to 270 beds, the City will create an additional 230 JISH units for people who are homeless with a history of justice involvement. This brings the total JISH bed commitment to 500 units.
- In addition to baselining the City's current \$5 million investment in transitional housing for people with justice involvement, the City will increase funding to \$25M (increasing the number of units from 100 to 500 by FY23) for transitional housing services enable people to avoid jail by participating in ATDs and ATIs and stabilize post-release.
- Commitments, adopted from the NYCCrisis Prevention and Response Task Force recommendations that ensure people with behavioral health needs are provided medical treatment and community-based responses to limit justice-involvement. Highlights of these investments include 8 new New Health Engagement and Assessment (HEAT) teams to proactively engage people at risk of mental health crises. These teams – which include one clinician and one peer – connect people to care and other stabilizing support, preventing mental health needs from becoming crises.
- Other highlights include 6 Mobile Crisis Teams, which ensure a more rapid response by mental health professionals and peers to those in mental health distress, and 4 new Intensive Mobile Treatment teams, which provides proactive and sustained engagement with those individuals with behavioral health needs. This commitment will also include 4 new co-response teams in high need precincts, in which police officers and mental health clinicians work together to respond to 911 calls involving those in mental health distress.

Community Based Violence Reduction

To increase investment in neighborhood based and community led programs that improve public safety and reduce violence, the City will invest additional \$2.7M in new investments and expanded Cure Violence programming in 6 areas including:

- **25th Precinct in East Harlem**, encompassing New York City Housing Authority's (NYCHA's) Senator Robert F. Wagner, Sr. Houses
- **40th Precinct in the Mott Haven section of the Bronx**, encompassing NYCHA's Judge Lester Patterson Houses and Mitchel Senior Center Houses
- **113th Precinct in Southeast Queens**, encompassing the southeastern area of Jamaica, Queens, along with St. Albans, Hollis, Springfield Gardens, South Ozone Park, South Jamaica, Addisleigh Park, and Locust Manor.
- **47th Precinct in the Eastchester neighborhood of the Bronx**, encompassing NYCHA's Edenwald Houses.
- **60th Precinct in Southern Brooklyn**, encompassing Coney Island, Brighton Beach, West Brighton Beach, and Sea Gate.
- **67th Precinct in Central Brooklyn**, encompassing East Flatbush and Remsen Village

New neighborhood investments, announced today, will support communities surrounding the borough-based jails through new affordable housing, youth programming, community and cultural centers.

These local investments include:

- New programming and recreation spaces for young people that give them safe and productive environments. This includes two new community centers in the South Bronx at 1080 Ogden Avenue and at 337 East 139th Street, and investments in NYCHA community centers in the South Bronx at Mill Brook, Mitchel, Patterson and Mott Haven Houses.
- New affordable housing in the South Bronx at 351 Powers Avenue and 320 Concord Avenue.
- Capital improvements at Samuel Gompers High School, and P.S. 99 and P.S. 139 in Queens. Technology investments for P.S. 65 in the South Bronx
- New performing arts space and initial city support for acquisition of a permanent home for the Museum of Chinese in America, at 215 Centre Street in Manhattan.
- Support for Chung Pak senior housing adjacent to the Manhattan borough-based jail site and small business relocation assistance.
- Upgrades to Columbus Park in lower Manhattan, including renovations to the comfort station and the pavilion.
- Streetscape improvements around the Brooklyn borough-based jail site.
- Upgrades to Queens Community House located at 80-02 Kew Gardens Road

Design Changes That Better Integrate New Facilities Into Their Surrounding Communities

Negotiations between the Mayor’s Office and Council will result in additional improvements to the City’s plan to build borough-based jail facilities to prioritize therapeutic environments, and culture change in all aspects of the borough-based jail system, and to better integrate DOC and programmatic staff. About 40% of the housing units across the borough-based system will be dedicated therapeutic units with specific staffing and services to better serve people with mental health, substance use, and complex medical needs.

This effort was born from a commission created by the City Council in 2016, and led by former New York State Chief Judge Jonathan Lippman, to study how to improve our jail system and our criminal justice system as a whole.

In 2018, the de Blasio administration initiated the Uniformed Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) process to site the new borough-based jails. Through months of engagement, both locally in communities with proposed jail sites, and also more broadly with criminal justice stakeholders, the plan to site borough-based jails evolved to maximize investments in addressing the underlying causes of incarceration, transform our justice system, and respond to local community-based concerns about building scale.

In addition, to ensure that Rikers Island is never again used to incarcerate people, the City Council will vote today to initiate a City Map change that will restrict the use of detention centers on Rikers Island after December 31, 2026, thus requiring such facilities to close.

Additional details and a full list of commitments are included in a Points of Agreement letter signed by the Mayor and received by the Council on October 16, 2019.

I am very proud of the community investments that I have secured from the administrative,” said **Council Member Karen Koslowitz**. “As a result of these investments our seniors will receive the services that they deserve, our children will be better equipped to succeed, and the community overall will benefit. Moving forward it will be my imperative that these investments will be implemented in a timely and responsible manner.”

“The citywide community justice investments committed to by the de Blasio administration, in consultation with Speaker Johnson and the Council, is an essential component to closing Rikers. We answered the call from advocates across the city to make sure we are not just tearing down old jails to replace them with new jails—we are investing in neighborhoods to transform how we approach community justice for generations to come,” said **Council Member Stephen Levin**.

“Above all, the effort to close Rikers is about enacting bold policy changes and building investments in marginalized communities to address the root causes of mass incarceration. These citywide investments signal an important step to reforming our broken criminal justice system while deepening support for the communities who need them the most – and that includes Lower Manhattan, which has housed the Manhattan Detention Center for decades,” said **Council Member Margaret S. Chin**.

“Since the initial announcement of the borough-based jail plan in early 2018, I have stressed the importance of holistic community investments for the South Bronx - a neighborhood that has been historically neglected by all levels of government. My staff and I have met with various stakeholders to cultivate a community investment package, including local youth groups, justice-involved people, seniors, public housing residents, community board members, clergy leaders, and social service providers,” said **Council Member Diana Ayala**. “I am proud to share that their vision will be brought to fruition with the millions of dollars earmarked by the Administration for various investments. With a new youth hub, improved community centers, and an expansion of the Cure Violence program, Mott Haven youth will have access to resources that will help ensure they lead healthy, productive, and rewarding lives. I thank the Bronx Neighborhood Advisory Committee for shaping this package and I look forward to working alongside the Administration to ensure these investments are promptly delivered to the South Bronx.”

“I applaud Mayor de Blasio, Speaker Johnson, and community advocates in all five boroughs for these transformative investments which bring our moral imperative to close Rikers within reach. My Office is proud to have helped lay the groundwork to close Rikers by funding the City's first-ever supervised release program, creating the City's first Project Reset diversion programs, and declining to prosecute thousands of low-level offenses each year. We will continue to support the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, the Council, and Manhattan communities in our shared effort to drive both crime and incarceration to historic lows,” said **Manhattan District Attorney Cy Vance, Jr.**

“I thank Mayor de Blasio, Speaker Johnson and the City Council for providing significant resources to transform our criminal justice system,” said **Brooklyn District Attorney Eric Gonzalez**. “I am especially grateful for the funding of a planning grant for The Imagining Project in partnership with Columbia University, which will ultimately lead to reducing the criminal justice footprint in Brooklyn while enhancing public safety. My Office has been leading the way in reducing admissions to Rikers while working with community partners to develop more meaningful approaches to hold individuals accountable. Together, we can build a fairer and more effective justice system.”

“While I have had my reservations regarding the process, I have never wavered on the moral imperative of closing Rikers Island. I applaud all involved in reaching a resolution that closes Rikers for good and replaces it with historic investments and major criminal justice reforms including diversion and violence prevention programs, mental health services and humane, community based jails,” said **Assemblymember Jo Anne Simon**.

“Above all else, reducing the city jail population is most important to me,” said **Majority Leader Laurie A. Cumbo**. “After relentlessly advocating for our community in a series of conversations, the mayoral administration has affirmed its intent to reduce the number of beds from 4,000 down to 3,300 across the four borough-based facilities by 2026. Institutional, restorative justice organizations including JustLeadershipUSA, Vera Institute of Justice, Exodus Transitional Community, and Katal Center for Health, Equity, and Justice have approved this commitment for new rehabilitation centers. This action will bring the jail population to historic lows in New York City, transforming the standard criminal justice system to include an individualized approach and integrating community support. The severe reductions in the number of beds and physical square footage of these local jails will usher in a better New York for generations to come. Our current justice system is punitive and ignores mental health concerns, and this new approach will create a platform to transform people’s lives through access to education, resources, and for many, a real opportunity for restorative justice.”

“Closing Rikers Island is one of the most important votes this Council has ever taken, but these critical investments in restoring and healing our communities are the most effective part of the plan that will drastically reduce our incarcerated population by providing opportunities for at-risk New Yorkers,” said **Council Member Donovan Richards**. “Locally, increased investments in the Crisis Management System in Southeast Queens and a community justice center in Rockaway will help divert New Yorkers away from the criminal justice system before they get caught in a system for the rest of their life. I’d like to thank Speaker Johnson, the Council’s Land Use and Criminal Justice divisions and all of my colleagues for their thoughtful dedication to pushing this plan to be the best that it can be. The work doesn’t end today, since we will have to hold this administration and the next accountable to the progress that must be made over the next few years until Rikers is shut down forever.”

"Throughout this process I have stressed the importance of investing in communities most impacted by the criminal justice system. These targeted, citywide investments further indicate that closing Rikers Island is not only a land-use action, but an urgent moment to overhaul the criminal justice system. I am grateful to Speaker Johnson for his partnership and for heeding calls of my colleagues," said **Council Member Keith Powers**.

“The announcement regarding community investments tied to the new borough-based facilities illustrates our commitment to a new vision for criminal justice and reform in New York City,” said **Council Member Adrienne Adams**. The revised plan not only supports the push to examine the root causes of criminal misconduct for further decarceration, but will also provide essential resources to allow the impacted communities to flourish. I am grateful that the administration has acted on feedback that I, numerous colleagues in government, community advocates and so many more have provided to contribute to changes that will allow this City to be an example for other municipalities across the country to follow.”

"Community programs are critically important to reducing the city's jail population. I am pleased that the City is expanding community investments and prioritizing the vital work that social services providers do to make the closure of Rikers Island a reality," said **Council Member Rory Lancman**.

"Closing Rikers now is essential. The Progressive Caucus has won commitments in the communities being most affected for more transitional housing, healthcare support, and connection centers along with more programs to help local residents with mental health. Thank you to Speaker Johnson and Mayor de Blasio for working with the Progressive Caucus in making this commitment to these communities," said **Council Member Ben Kallos**.

“The decision to shutter Rikers Island is not one I take lightly but neither is it one I find difficult to make. Rikers cannot remain open. The jail’s foundation is rotten from the history of violence and injustice it housed. But simply abandoning the building is not a solution in itself; the physical complex is only a symbol of New York’s criminal justice failures. That’s why in addition to decarcerating thousands of unfairly warehoused New

Yorkers, the plan to close Rikers includes significant investments in our communities — the place where real change starts,” said **Council Member Francisco Moya**.

"Putting an end to Rikers Island is a mission that goes far beyond the walls of the jails themselves. In addition to criminal justice reforms at every level, it will also take investments in communities and in supportive housing, mental health treatment, alternatives to incarceration, and reentry services to help keep people out of jail and out of the justice system altogether. The programs and investments announced today are strong initial steps towards the changes that we need to see to achieve our shared goal of a better approach to justice in New York City," said **The Honorable Jonathan Lippman, former Chief Judge of New York and New York State Court of Appeals, and Chair of the Independent Commission on NYC Criminal Justice and Incarceration Reform**.

“Today, we not only celebrate the death nail in the carceral coffin that is Rikers Island, but recognition of the forthcoming opportunities to shake loose its legacy and focus reform on investing in the communities that have been perpetually harmed by over-policing and mass incarceration. This investment must prioritize community-based organizations that, even in the absence of meaningful financial support, have been fighting on the ground for generations to mend the tears in our social fabric produced by this broken system. Only with significant monetary commitments to supporting these groups and their efforts to increase access to education, job development and skills-based learning can we create equity and with it, raise directly impacted people and their families out of poverty and into the sun. With this victory, we now have the political will to hold policymakers accountable and with it, validation that our fight is not in vain,” said **Vivian Nixon, Executive Director, College and Community Fellowship**.

“Exodus Transitional Community is deeply grateful for the commitment from the City to ensure that investments in communities are made in order to prevent incarceration. As a preventative, reentry and advocacy organization, we fully understand that by addressing the root causes of incarceration, we will be able to continue to decarcerate our city until we reach the day where jails are no longer used. Located in East Harlem, Exodus is particularly excited about the expanded investment in funding for cure violence interrupters. The Wagner (and surrounding) Housing Developments experience high rates of violence, and our young people and communities are suffering with trauma. We know that those closest to the problem are closest to the solutions, and the City’s community investment plan will provide community-based organizations with access to the resources needed to address violence in our own communities. Furthermore, the investments in diversion centers (one of which will be located in East Harlem), medical mobile units, the NYCHA Family Reunification Program, transitional, scatter-site, and affordable housing units, and youth centers (to name a few) will help folks meet their basic needs and break the cycles of intergenerational incarceration and poverty. We are also pleased with the expanded justice investments, including the additional funding for alternative-to-incarceration programs and supervised release. Exodus looks forward to continuing to work with the City to ensure that all New Yorkers needs are being met, and that we overhaul our broken systems and replace them with community and healing, said **Kandra Clark, Associate Vice President, Exodus Transitional Community**.

"We applaud the City Council and the Mayor's efforts to secure these initial investments as part of the plan to close Rikers Island. The programs, services, and resources supported by these funds will help to shrink the footprint of the criminal justice system in New Yorkers' lives. But these investments are a first step, not an end in and of themselves. New York City must expand upon these investments--for more permanent affordable housing, community-based treatment and care, restorative justice programs, and violence prevention efforts in the districts most impacted by over-criminalization and mass incarceration--to build the infrastructure we need for truly safe and thriving neighborhoods. Thank you to Speaker Johnson, the Mayor, and the City Council for setting a precedent of unparalleled investments in our communities as a strategy for delivering more public safety and relying on incarceration less,” said **Nicholas Turner, President and Director, Vera Institute of Justice**.

New Yorkers are creating history and leading this country in what could be a monumental reversal of its shameful legacy as the #1 incarcerator in the world. The City's plan, catalyzed by decades of community advocacy, prioritizes people and their needs over punishment and retribution. Smaller, more humane jails located in close proximity to the courts are significant building blocks in the effort to overhaul the criminal injustice system. There is much work still to be done to radically change the culture of the NYC jail system and it is incumbent upon all New Yorkers to work together and make that happen. The City's plan moves us forward to create that change," said **Soffiyah Elijah, Executive Director, Alliance of Families for Justice.**

"The #BEYONDrosies 2020 campaign believes that closing Rikers isn't enough without tackling the root causes of incarceration with deep community investments. We believe when women thrive, families and communities thrive. Now is the time to invest in the voices, experiences and needs of women directly impacted by mass incarceration. This is only the beginning - in partnership with our allies, we will continue advocating for everyone to evaluate budget priorities and invest in proven, community-based solutions to public health and safety concerns," said Rita Zimmer, **President of Women's Community Justice Association.**

"We applaud the City's decision to invest in critically needed community-based resources as we work to close Rikers Island and transition away from over-reliance on incarceration. For too long, and at great human and financial cost, our jails have warehoused people on minor offenses whose unmet needs of homelessness and untreated mental illness could have been addressed while they were at liberty in the community and before they ever became involved in the criminal justice system. With these key investments in housing, mental health services, gun violence prevention and youth services, these vulnerable New Yorkers can get the help they so desperately need, while we continue to build a safer and more just City," said **JoAnne Page, President and CEO of the Fortune Society.**

"As a person who lives in Harlem, far too many communities of color have been under-resourced for decades. Now is the time to make investments in housing, mental health resources, and alternatives to incarceration that prioritize restorative justice. Some of our key investment demands were met, but we are just getting started with securing the resources our communities have always deserved, and the investments the City must make to repair the harm Rikers has done," said **Vidal Guzman from JustLeadershipUSA.**

"Today's historic vote by the City Council marks a major milestone in the city's journey to become the safest and least incarcerated large city in the United States," stated **Vincent Schiraldi, co-director of the Columbia University Justice Lab and former Commissioner of New York City Probation.** "When historians and criminologists write about the end of mass incarceration, Chapter One will be today's Council's vote."

"Putting an end to Rikers Island is a mission that goes far beyond the walls of the jails themselves. In addition to criminal justice reforms at every level, it will also take investments in communities and in supportive housing, mental health treatment, alternatives to incarceration, and reentry services to help keep people out of jail and out of the justice system altogether. The programs and investments announced today are strong initial steps towards the changes that we need to see to achieve our shared goal of a better approach to justice in New York City," said **Tyler Nims, Executive Director of Independent Commission on NYC Criminal Justice and Incarceration Reform.**

"Directly impacted advocates, activists and organizers across the field have been on the frontlines working tirelessly with legislators to not only decarcerate our city, but build communities as well. We know that community investments are essential to securing community health and safety. This is why directly impacted people, like myself, and our allies have long demanded the City make community investments as part of the plan to close Rikers. We won't leave anyone behind on Rikers, and we will make sure that within that process there is a commitment to investing in and supporting our communities. Today's announcement is a critical step in the fight to close Rikers and build communities, and we applaud the City Council for putting forth this

package," said **Donna Hylton, Senior Justice Advisor with the Katal Center for Health, Equity, and Justice.**

“The City Council's vote to close Rikers Island and build smaller and safer borough-based jails marks a huge step towards a more just New York City. For more than two decades, Osborne has worked with thousands of people a year inside Rikers—and in the community—to provide meaningful pathways home. When asked by the City to contribute to the design process, Osborne worked with directly affected families and communities to ensure that these new jails will be focused on the wellbeing of the people who live in them, work in them, and visit them. We congratulate the advocates who started the effort to close Rikers and everyone who has pushed this project forward. As New York continues to address the harms caused by Rikers Island and current criminal justice practices, it is essential that they continue to invest in communities most affected by incarceration, ensure that fewer people are arrested and detained, and that the oppressive culture on Rikers Island is not imported into the new jails and programs,” said **Osborne Association President and CEO Elizabeth Gaynes.**

This is a momentous day for New York City. Years of advocacy, and the work of people directly impacted by the inhuman culture in Rikers Island has brought us to where we are today - The vote to close Rikers Island! With eagerness and great hope, we look to a future of working with diverse leaders with an eye towards empowering local communities, so that all can be safe and prosperous. ‘This is the day the Lord has made; We will rejoice and be glad in it.’ Pslam 118:24,” said **Rev. Wendy Calderón-Payne, Executive Director, BronxConnect.**

“This is truly a historical moment for New York City, and the progress that has been made in closing Rikers is remarkable. I am heartened to see both the vote out of the Land Use Committee and the package of investments to strengthen neighborhoods and achieve justice reform. I thank everyone who has brought us this far,” said **Herb Sturz, Senior Advisor, Open Society Foundations and FedCap.**

These investments--and a hard deadline for the closure of Rikers Island--enact a new vision for criminal justice. And not just in New York City. What happens here in the coming years has the potential to create a true blueprint for decarceration. For more than 50 years, CASES' programs have proven that alternatives to incarceration produce better public safety outcomes compared to jail and prison while also helping people who have become justice system-involved to address challenges and access opportunities to improve their lives--all as they remain in their communities,” said **Joel Copperman, CEO, CASES.**

“I commend the Mayor’s Office and City Council for not just vowing to close Rikers Island but for also investing hundreds of millions of dollars in criminal justice programs and reforms. This money, much of which is going to community-based programs, will empower communities and ensure that fewer people come in contact with the criminal justice system. Indeed, it is the community itself that made this happen – organizations like JLUSA and the broader #CloseRikers coalition deserve the credit. Today, is a big step forward for justice,” said **Derek Perkinson Director of NYC Chapters and Manager of the National Headquarters, National Action Network.**

“This accomplishment has been a long time in the making. Rikers Island is a stigmatizing, demonizing place and the wrong place for the sons and daughters of our community,” said **Marty Horn, John Jay College of Criminal Justice.** “I am pleased that this change is accompanied by a recognition of the need for community investments to promote success and I congratulate all those who have worked long and hard to achieve it.”

Gen. Douglas MacArthur asserted “a true leader has the confidence to go it alone, the courage to make tough decisions, and the compassion to listen to the needs of others.” Thanks to the leadership of Herb Sturz - founder of Wildcat Services, a myriad of other social entrepreneurs, and now Mayor de Blasio and the City Council - courage is made manifest in closing Rikers Island. New York City leads with compassion; may the nation follow. Wildcat is and will be ready to help those who leave Rikers Island and the future borough based

facilities have a chance to succeed,” said **Edward J. Arsenault, Executive Director of Wildcat Services - The Fedcap Group**.

"Today's announcement is the realization of a vision that many criminal justice reformers have been pursuing for a generation. The Mayor and the City Council are not only taking real steps toward closing the jails on Rikers Island, they are also making the kinds of investments in New York City neighborhoods and alternative-to-incarceration programs that will reap dividends for decades to come. This is a turning point for our City and another indication that New York intends to stay at the cutting edge of justice reform,” said **Greg Berman, Director, Center for Court Innovation**.

"The New York City Bar Association applauds the Mayor and the City Council for this comprehensive, forward-looking proposal which not only will close the Rikers Island jails, but also will put in place multiple criminal justice reforms to reduce New York City's incarcerated population and enhance post-release reentry support,” said **New York City Bar Association President Roger Juan Maldonado**. “This is a historic opportunity to end the blight of Rikers forever and continue New York City on the path to making incarceration a last resort.”

“New York City is taking the lead not only in closing Rikers Island and drastically reducing the use of bail, but also in providing community-driven services to those in need. We're proud to be one of the providers partnering with the city in the expansion of Supervised Release,” said **Aubrey Fox, Executive Director of the New York City Criminal Justice Agency**.

The closing of Rikers is more than monumental. It is a clear agreement that the atrocities and pain that have happened on Rikers Island need to come to an end. Thank you to the Mayor and others for standing firm on closing Rikers, said **Iesha Sekou, Chief Executive Officer, Street Corner Resources**.

"Congratulations to the Mayor and City Council for your commitment and investment in making our city safer and stronger! New York City is an example for other major cities. There are many who believe that there is no connection between community investments, criminal justice reform and the well-being of the community. Mr. de Blasio and members of our City Council understand that community engagement and investment is what will keep our communities safe. Closing Rikers and opening up communities is essential to making our communities safe for all," **Rev. Gil Monroe, President, 67th Precinct Clergy**.

“Rikers Island has been a travesty and an embarrassment to anyone concerned about justice for those facing trial in New York City. I applaud the Mayor's commitment to closing Rikers Island and am pleased that the Mayor has taken this step, said **Marc Greenberg, Executive Director, Interfaith Assembly on Homelessness and Housing**.

“New York City has already seen the largest decline in its jail population of any major city in the US, from 21,000 almost 30 years ago to less than 7,000 today. These significant investments agreed to today by both the Mayor and City Council Speaker will be essential in cutting the jail population by yet another 50% through funding for pre-trial release programs, jail diversion and reentry and for programs that address some of the basic root causes of crime such as housing, treatment and mental health services. It is a thoughtful and holistic approach that is designed to have the fewest people in jail as possible and to ensure that those who are incarcerated are given the essential services they need and are safe and are treated fairly and with dignity," said **Michael Jacobson, Executive Director, CUNY Institute for State and Local Governance**.

“Many in opposition of closing Rikers Island have never experienced the brutal violence that has resulted in its long-term traumatic effects on communities across the City. It is imperative that Rikers Island be closed. Tax paying dollars should not be used to help perpetuate a broken cycle, but rather towards truly transforming justice. We must start fresh!

This can only be done by closing Rikers Island and offering smaller borough-based jails that will facilitate better access to families and include Community-based organizations at the forefront leading the direction towards rehabilitation and mindset change,” said **Shanduke McPhatter, Founder and Executive Director, Gangstas Making Astronomical Change (GMACC)**

The New York Women’s Foundation commends Mayor de Blasio and Speaker Johnson and City Council Leadership on this commitment to investing in our communities to further our City’s journey to becoming more just for all. As a public women’s foundation rooted in community, we know that investments that support the health, safety and economic opportunity of the system impacted individuals and families are key levers for achieving decarceration and decriminalization. We also celebrate the leadership of the community organizations and leaders who got us to this point,” said **Ana L. Oliveira, President & CEO, The New York Women’s Foundation.**

“With these investments in community-based services, the impressive reduction in the pretrial detention population and the impending vote to close Rikers Island, New York City is creating a new vision of justice that will serve as a beacon of hope to the national justice reform movement. Credit goes to our elected officials and the advocacy community that has pushed for these deep reforms,” said **Jeremy Travis Executive Vice President of Criminal Justice, Arnold Ventures President Emeritus, John Jay College of Criminal Justice.**

"Investing in communities and changing the trajectory of outcomes of individuals and families who are justice involved is paramount to the changes we need to see in NYC. The continued expansion of programs, housing and mental health services are the right direction for the City in its decarceration and community reinvestment efforts," said **Dr. Alethea Taylor, Member, Independent Commission on NYC Criminal Justice and Incarceration.** "Also, addressing culture by engaging a collaborative training structure is crucial and a good start to the overall functioning of staff, service providers and visitors within borough facilities to promote a humane environment. I urge the City to continue development of trauma-informed care best practices in the new facilities."

“One of the core components in NYC’s now two decades long decline in crime has been the City’s willingness to invest in prevention services. The mayor and City Council continue and expand that wise investment strategy with this announcement today,” said **Richard Aborn, Citizens Crime Commission, President.** “Importantly, amongst a myriad of important funding streams, this announcement accelerates the recognition between mental health issues and criminal behavior and rather than reacting punitively to crimes invests in mental health treatment to prevent crimes from occurring. Other less understood relationships between criminal offending and other conditions, such as homelessness, especially amongst young offenders, is also recognized here and addressed. The strategy employed in these investments get us closer to addressing the “vector point”; that is the point where one’s behavior begins to diverge from lawfulness, and critically, addresses the factors driving the divergence. This is a significant step forward in our understanding of what drives crime, and more importantly, how to aid individuals in avoiding criminal conduct. Our City will be the safer for it. “

“I am so glad that Mayor de Blasio and the City Council has decided invest in building communities, investing in schools and playgrounds and has moved to close Rikers,” said **Imam Tahir Kukaj, Miraj Islamic School/Albanian Islamic Cultural Center Council, Inc.**

"Five years ago, if you had said that Rikers' Island would be shut down by 2020 and the prison population in NYC cut in half from 14,000 to 7,000, no one would have believed you. Rikers' closing and the City's additional \$17 million of new funding in support of alternatives to incarceration, investment in mental health services, and pledges for additional units of supportive housing for justice involved individuals, offers hope that Kalif Browder and the thousands of others unjustly incarcerated on Rikers' Island did not die in vain. While there is still much work to be done in addressing underlying issues from housing to mental health concerns, today, New

York City is taking a bold step in the right direction on criminal justice reform,” said **Rev. Dr. Chloe Breyer, Executive Director, Interfaith Center New York.**

We applaud the City Council's efforts to secure these initial investments as part of the plan to close Rikers Island. More supportive and affordable housing, playgrounds, schools, and community-based treatment and resources will help to shrink the footprint of the criminal justice system in New Yorkers' lives and set New York City on a path to build the infrastructure we need for truly safe and thriving neighborhoods. Thank you to Speaker Johnson and the Council for setting this important precedent of investing in our communities as a strategy for decarceration,” said **Insha Rahman, Director of Strategy and New Initiatives, Vera Institute of Justice.**

“This is a truly great step towards meaningful criminal justice reform in New York City. Incarcerated people will now have much greater access to the services they need and their families will have much greater access to their loved ones. Rikers is emblematic of the failed system of retributive justice that has destroyed lives and contributed nothing to public safety. As both a pastor and a retired law enforcement professional I commend this movement toward restorative justice,” said **Rev. Dr. Karyn Carlo (NYPD Captain Retired).**

“With the closing of Rikers Island and 391 Million dollars set aside for proactive programs to divert individuals from criminal activity can very well be the future focus for a safer New York City,” said **Rev. Dr. Phil Craig, The Greater Springfield Community Church.**

“On behalf of the residents of Alfred E. Smith Houses, we support the closing of Rikers Island and having smaller jails in each borough. It is the most humane thing that can happen for the detainees, as well as for the correction officers. A system of smaller community jails can help ensure that detainees’ constitutional rights are better protected; especially their right to speedy trial, which was often affected by travel to and from Rikers. We thank the Mayor and Council Members who are supporting the closing of Rikers,” said **Aixa Torres, President of the Alfred E. Smith Houses Resident Association.**

“I think closing Rikers is a good thing, and the healing should begin. It’s that simple. Smaller facilities must get people out of the system through education and rehabilitation,” said **Bihari Lall, Board Member, Indo-Caribbean Alliance.**

“Rikers should be closed. The alternative to Rikers Island will provide those who are incarcerated with more effective rehabilitation programs,” said **Vishnu Mahadeo, Executive Director, Richmond Hill Economic Development Council.**

“Keeping Rikers open would be a disaster for New York. It is time that we adopt smart solutions and open smaller facilities with a human face,” said **Shri Dr. Dhanpaul Narine, President, The Shri Trimurti Bhavan.**

For generations, mass incarceration has torn families and communities apart, with the heaviest burden falling upon communities of color, LGBTQI people and people experiencing poverty. We commend Mayor de Blasio and the NYC Council for taking bold steps to close Rikers, reduce the jail population and move towards an incarceration model that is safer, smaller and more humane,” said **Gabriel Blau, Co-Founder, Equality New York.**

“It’s personal to me. I once was placed at Rikers Island for an internship. I saw first-hand what happens there. United Madrassi Association is against the inhumane treatment of human beings who have once made questionable choices in life. We are pro-rehab and against a punitive system to correct unlawfulness. We advocate for the closing of Rikers,” said **Vijah Ramjattan, Founder & President, United Madrassi Association.**

“I agree, close Rikers. It’s old and filthy. Every person is a human, even though they committed a crime, they should be kept in a better place. I feel we should move on from Rikers. I believe there should be a lot of changes in these newly proposed facilities,” said **Indra Seet, Member of Geeta Mandir & Founder of Starz International Orchestra.**

“For Hindus, ahimsa (non-violence and non-harm) is a cornerstone of justice. Since Rikers is the site of so many gross human rights violations, Sadhana adds our voice to those who seek to close it forever and find humane ways to show care and compassion to each other, even when we commit crimes,” said **Sunita Viswanath, Sadhana: Coalition of Progressive Hindus.**

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