

COMMUNITY BOARD 1 – MANHATTAN
RESOLUTION

DATE: June 28, 2022

COMMITTEE OF ORIGIN: EXECUTIVE

COMMITTEE VOTE:	11 In Favor	0 Opposed	0 Abstained	0 Recused
BOARD VOTE:	0 In Favor	0 Opposed	0 Abstained	0 Recused

RE: Feasibility Study for the Relocation of Women at Rikers to the Manhattan Detention Complex

WHEREAS: The de Blasio Administration set in motion a carceral reform plan for the closure of Rikers Island Detention Facility by creating a borough-based jail (BBJ) strategy whereby four out of the five boroughs of New York City would each house a city jail to accommodate the entire population of inmates; and

WHEREAS: Manhattan Community Board 1 (CB1) has a long record of strongly opposing the demolition of the existing Manhattan Detention Complex (MDC) and the construction of a new and larger jail at 124 -125 White Street (aka 100 Centre Street), part of the City's Borough Based Jail (BBJ) plan. In May 2019, during review of the BBJ ULURP application, CB1 and Manhattan Community Board 3 (CB3) adopted resolutions strongly opposing the demolition of the existing MDC and the construction of a new jail at the site. Since 2019, CB1 has adopted numerous resolutions about the jail. In January 2022, CB1 adopted a resolution urging Mayor Eric Adams to pause the BBJ plan, until all alternatives could be reviewed and understood. CB1 has also strongly opposed what they believe is the unnecessary demolition of the existing MDC, and the construction of a new interim sally port; and

WHEREAS: While that plan was ultimately approved, criticism of the extent of carceral reform remains with the inclusion of the population of incarcerated women in the same facility as the men in the Queens Detention Facility in Kew Gardens; and

WHEREAS: In the interest of moving forward with the closing of Rikers, and in maintaining a separate facility for women, multiple parties have shown interest in adaptively reusing the existing state-owned Lincoln Correctional Facility at 31-33 West 110th Street, a former detention complex that is currently vacant in Manhattan; and

WHEREAS: While the Lincoln Correctional Facility on Central Park North is vacant, the difficulty in transferring ownership from the State of New York to the City of New York and the distance from the courts in Lower Manhattan may not be the most efficient option; and

WHEREAS: Renovating the South Tower of the existing Manhattan Detention Complex would not require any additional bulk to accommodate such a use; and

WHEREAS: The resulting complex would achieve many of the goals of the BBJ plan, such as local access, ample transit options, and a connection to the courts and community; and

WHEREAS: Respected architects, including Bill and Corie Sharples of SHoP Architects endorsed reusing the south tower for significant reasons including cost, and the many environmental and quality of life benefits, and

WHEREAS: Specifically, Mr. Samton wrote in a letter the Mayor in February “ A renovation to adapt and reuse the existing complex will be significantly more cost-effective and environmentally sustainable solution which will help expedite the city’s closing of the jails on Rikers Island in 2027.” And Mr. and Ms. Sharples wrote that *the goals that DDC hopes to achieve with a new building – energy efficiency, space efficiency and ADA compliance including some added program space can be achieved with adaptive reuse, and the project will be less expensive, less destructive to the neighboring community and delivered faster than through the current path we are on.*

WHEREAS: Renovating the tower for a smaller, more specific population as opposed to the general population and avoiding additional bulk may reduce the complexity of realizing improved sight-lines and other modern safety enhancement for the incarcerated as well as the guards; and

WHEREAS: Councilmember Christopher Marte and Council Member Lynn Shulman have requested that Mayor Adams carefully consider the option to relocate the women detained at Rikers and currently in the Bedford Correctional Facility to the existing MDC, improving the conditions for the women and expediting the closure of the island, and

WHEREAS: Councilmember Christopher Marte has also urged that Comptroller Lander as an independent citywide elected official issue a study the feasibility of the option to retrofit the existing MDC South Tower, a building eligible for NYC landmarks designation,; now

THEREFORE
BE IT
RESOLVED

THAT: CB 1 joins Councilmember Marte in urging for a feasibility study;*for the adaptive reuse of the MDC South Tower at 124 White Street. With rising inflation*

in addition to normal cost escalation, supply chain delays, erosion of the City's tax base and a looming recession, it would be completely irresponsible not to evaluate the costs of building new versus renovating the existing Manhattan Detention facility.

BE IT
FURTHER
RESOLVED
THAT:

CB 1 implores Mayor Adams to keep an open mind and entertain the learnings of such a study once it is completed.

