

#NoNewJailsNYC

**NO
NEW
JAILS
NYC**

**Environmental Impacts of New
Borough Jails**

#NoNewJailsNYC

JAILS & COMMUNITY IMPACTS

**New York City should divest from
jails and invest in communities!**

Jails have high social and economic costs for communities.

Department of Corrections budget in 2017¹

\$1.4 billion

NYC spending on policing²

\$5.2 billion

NYC spending on criminal courts³

\$950 million

The borough-based jail plan will cost the city⁴

\$10 billion

In comparison...

NYCHA budget for 2017⁷

\$3.3 billion

(of which \$1.7 billion was raised through rents)

Department of Health budget 2017 budget⁸

\$1.6 billion

Department of Homeless Services 2017 budget⁹

\$1.8 billion

Department of Parks & Recreation 2017 budget¹⁰

\$500 million

Department of Education 2017 budget¹¹

\$24.4 billion

(or \$14,500 per student; \$12 billion is City funds)

The 2017 budget for policing, courts, and incarceration was over \$7 billion. That's billions of dollars that the city could have spent on affordable housing, schools, healthcare, parks, repairing NYCHA housing, and investing in transformative justice processes that actually heal communities.

Until Rikers is closed, the city will continue to incarcerate people on Rikers for an average yearly cost of over \$200,000⁵ per person. Citywide, the cost of incarceration per person per year is \$140,000⁵.

By prioritizing incarceration, the City demonstrates its lack of concern for socioeconomic conditions in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, and Manhattan.

Incarceration is economically ruinous for individuals¹², families and communities¹³.

Being incarcerated causes people to lose jobs, homes, and family members¹⁴. All working class communities (including the ones in which the facilities will be located) are harmed when the city budget prioritizes paying for cops, courts, and jails over schools, housing, transit, and health.

Fines, penalties, and court surcharges diverted almost \$100 million in 2017 from working class communities of color to the City¹⁵.

Bail extracted an additional \$20 million per year from mostly working-class Black and Latinx families¹⁶. The use of cash bail in NYC forces families to buy their loved ones' freedom. Bail functions either as a temporary loan to the City, or a high-interest, profit-earning loan to the private bail bond industry.

Through fines, court fees, and bails, the city makes money from policing and incarcerating our communities. Divest from incarceration to invest in communities.

Jails perpetuate a culture of racial violence.

The Lippman Commission & 6 years of Nunez monitoring document a pervasive “culture of violence” on Rikers²⁵. That culture doesn't belong anywhere: not on Rikers Island, and not in any neighborhood. We need a culture of transformative, community-based justice, not a culture of violence.

Building jails in Brooklyn, Chinatown, Queens, and the Bronx perpetuates the historical and ongoing legacies of subjecting working class, immigrant, and communities of color to disproportionate surveillance, policing, and incarceration.

Building jails to incarcerate community members perpetuates racist cultures of punishment, isolation, stigmatization, and violence.

All jails are monuments to violence.

No neighborhood's character is preserved by turning it into a site of carceral occupation. Just as Rikers must be closed because it perpetuates harm, so too must we realize that these facilities will end up serving the same purposes and with the same legacy as Rikers Island.

Detaining our neighbors, family, and loved ones in jails displaces them from our communities, harming neighborhood character by disrupting the social, economic, and cultural ties that make NYC's neighborhoods what they are.

Integrating the proposed jail facilities into surrounding communities displaces people into the carceral system and also further extends jail spaces, policing and surveillance into arenas of everyday life. The city plans to incorporate necessary resources such as health services, therapeutic programs, community space, and parking into the jails rather than bring them directly to communities.

We need community facilities and services—not jails!

The neighborhoods in which they are proposing to build new jails want other services and facilities. Committing to building large-scale jails in Chinatown, Kew Gardens, Downtown Brooklyn, and Mott Haven means that these locations can't be used for other community needs and projects, either now or in the future.

Instead of a jail, Chinatown needs more affordable housing¹⁷. There's been more than 200 years of community struggle against xenophobia and anti-Asian racism¹⁸ in Chinatown and today, gentrification is threatening both its historic and cultural position in our city.

Instead of a jail, Brooklyn needs affordable housing. When completed, the Barclays Center redevelopment will add 6,000 apartments to the area, but only 2,250 "affordable" units¹⁹. Meanwhile, rising rents across Brooklyn are displacing working and middle class families of color²⁰.

Instead of a jail, Mott Haven needs a hospital and displacement prevention. The proposed site of the Bronx jail was once the only hospital in the area that accepted people of color as patients. As the South Bronx is targeted for "redevelopment," the city needs to invest now in resources that will prevent displacement²¹.

Instead of a jail, Kew Gardens needs affordable housing, services for elders, and a guarantee of true sanctuary for immigrants. Queens is one of the most diverse areas in the US²²; yet, gentrification, rising rents, and xenophobic immigration enforcement threaten the multiracial, intergenerational, and multi-class character of the borough²³.

Rather than jails, the city needs to invest in: housing for working class families; rent stabilization and subsidy programs; healthcare, including home health care that allows elders to stay in their homes²⁴; and increased access to legal services for undocumented people facing ICE harassment.

Jails are bad for our health.

Jails are bad for the health of incarcerated people²⁶ and the people who work in them²⁷. They divert resources and attention from the public and mental health resources that people require to avoid criminalization and arrest, including²⁹: access to safe housing; food and other necessities; low-threshold, non-stigmatizing mental health services; on-demand, conditionless medication assisted treatment for substance use; and community health centers.

Data on stress, policing, and incarceration shows that communities subjected to policing, state violence, immigration enforcement, and detention have worse health outcomes than other communities³⁰. If we cared about public health we would stop terrorizing the Black and Brown public with policing and incarceration.

NYC lives in the shadows of mass incarceration and its apparatuses of enforcement. The borough based jail plan merely redistributes the shadows, it does not eliminate them. We must close Rikers Island immediately without building new jails.

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Data compiled by the #NoNewJails Research Working Group.

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Follow us on Twitter [@nonewjails_nyc](https://twitter.com/nonewjails_nyc).

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#NoNewJailsNYC

**ALL
JAILS
ARE
TOXIC!**

**There is no such thing as a healthy
jail or a humane cage.**

What is Environmental Racism?

Ruth Wilson Gilmore describes racism as forcing “premature death” on certain groups of people, through state and structural violence, exploitation, exclusion, prisons and policing, and pollution. In order to understand the environmental impacts of the proposed jail plan, we must understand environmental racism and toxicity in NYC, as well as the health impacts of incarceration on people in and around jails.”¹

Environmental racism is when state agencies actively deny health and well-being to all living beings in specific areas, including people, animals, and plant life. In New York, disproportionate vulnerability to premature death has been produced through state-sanctioned projects that unevenly distribute harm and wellbeing.

- **Solid waste siting:**

An example of environmental racism in NYC includes solid waste facility siting. Over three-quarters of NYC’s garbage is processed in North Brooklyn, Southeast Queens, and the South Bronx ² exposing low-income communities to exhaust fumes that correlate with asthma. ³

- **Rikers is toxic:**

Built on an old landfill, Rikers is another example of environmental racism. The majority of people incarcerated at Rikers are Black or Latinx⁴. The stench from the landfill, isolation, extremely hot and cold temperatures, and poisonous gas and air pollution have led to the rapid deterioration of mental and physical health⁵ of people on Rikers.⁶

The new jails won't promote environmental justice or human health

The proposed jails will perpetuate the legacy of environmental racism in New York City. Hazardous contaminants will be present at each proposed jail site. However, the jails will not be built with the same regulations that protect **residential sites** from hazardous material exposure.

The City's Environmental Assessment Statement indicated that all proposed jail sites are currently located in "manufacturing area[s] that involved hazardous materials" and that there is reason to suspect that hazardous materials are present at each jail site.

Because the jails are zoned as "community facilities" rather than residential land use, high quality and safe living conditions are not prioritized for the 1,510 people who will be living in each of the jail facilities.¹¹

Because the incarcerated population is disproportionately drawn from working class Black and Latinx communities who already suffer the toxic health effects of environmental racism, incarceration will exacerbate existing health inequalities rather than reduce them.

Rather than invest in more affordable housing with livable environmental conditions, the city is proposing to warehouse primarily Black and Latinx people in facilities that are hazardous for their health and will result in vulnerability to premature death.

Jails are Bad for Human Health

Incarceration is bad for human health. Jails and all forms of incarceration deny mental, social and physical wellbeing to those inside. They isolate incarcerated people from community and deprive them of safety, control and agency over their bodies, and access to mental and physical healthcare.”⁷

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1 Jails make people more vulnerable to sickness because of malnutrition, forced proximity to lots of people, barriers to care and protection, and denial of people’s capacity for movement.⁸

2 Incarcerated people face significant barriers to maintaining forms of communication and social connection that enhance physical and psychological wellbeing, including reduced access to physical contact with loved ones.⁹

3 Jails regulate gender and sexuality through punishment and denial of medically-necessary care, contributing to ill health for trans and gender non-conforming people.

4 People with disabilities are also disciplined, punished, and stigmatized in ways that are directly oppose self-preservation.¹⁰

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#NoNewJailsNYC

**JAILS &
INFRA-
STRUC-
TURE!**

New York City should center community resources, not incarceration, in its planning and infrastructure.

Borough-Specific Impacts

The city's jail expansion plan is city-wide, and it will harm people from all 5 boroughs, as well as from the city's surrounding areas in New Jersey, Long Island, and other areas outside the city. We accordingly recognize and insist on this point: Opposition to the "network of modern jails" must be uncompromisingly total, and cannot fall into single-site and single-borough efforts. However, certain forms of harm are specific to the proposed locations of the jail expansion:

The Bronx:

Though one of the central arguments of this plan is the new jails' proximity with courthouses, The Bronx site would be closer to Rikers than to any existing courthouse. The city proposes building arraignment courts in the new jail. In a criminal justice system that increasingly relies on prosecutorial discretion and mandatory minimum sentences, building arraignment courthouses inside the jail will affirm defendants' impression that the police and courts are working together against them. The city would rezone "the western portion of the site" as a Special Mixed Use M1-4/R7-X district. This zoning allows heavy, noisy industry to exist next-door to tall, densely populated apartment buildings. The city hasn't explicitly laid out a plan for this space, but it does specify this zoning change. This should raise our suspicion, especially in the gentrifying South Bronx.

Brooklyn:

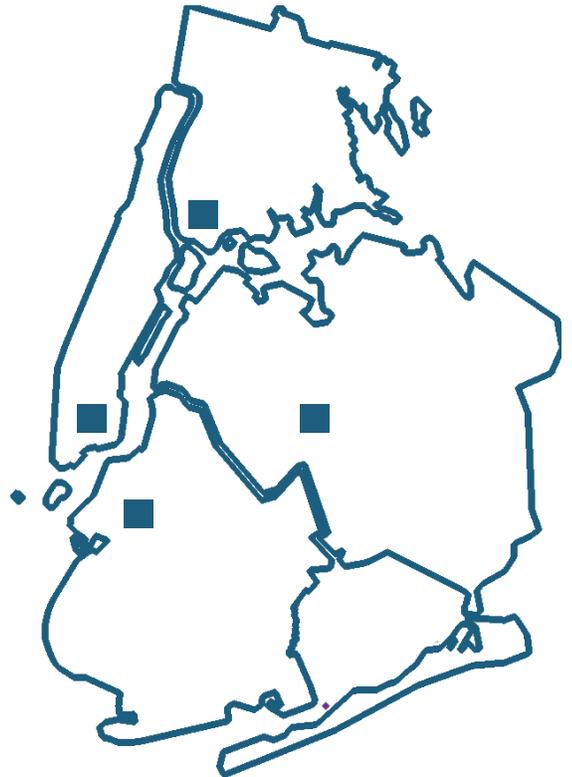
The city's plan included expanding the Brooklyn Detention Center by a factor of 8. The Brooklyn jail could be as many as 40 stories tall.

Manhattan:

The city initially proposed to build the new Chinatown jail at 80 Centre Street. Sustained community opposition pressured de Blasio to change the proposed location of the facility to the site of the current Manhattan Detention Complex (The Tombs), 125 White Street. The proposed replacement for The Tombs will triple the size of the current complex: from 12 floors to 50 floors.

Queens:

The Queens site contains the Queens Detention Complex which currently has a footprint of 497,000 gsf. The new jail will have a footprint that is almost four times the size of the current Queens Detention Complex; that is, 1,910,000 gsf.



Urban Design and Visual Resources

By incorporating “support space; community facility and/or retail space; arraignment courts” and housing into this jail expansion plan, the city runs access to community resources through its jails.

This centers human cages in the city’s infrastructure, and brings users of social resources (and their families) into frequent contact with Corrections Officers, razor-wire, and other forms of intense, dehumanizing “security.”

bright, austere and militarized zones that utterly inhospitable to human dwelling, by design.

The city wants to spend \$10 billion on 6,000 new cages and a few public housing units while NYCHA, housing more than 400,000 New Yorkers, is catastrophically underfunded.

carceral state that towers over an entire neighborhood.

Building towering jails subjects formerly incarcerated people to the constant threat of reliving the traumas they suffered in jails and prisons.

Including public housing in jail construction plans is unacceptable. Jails and their surrounding areas are loud,

To build a new 40-story jail is to build an ominous, hyper-visible monument to the

Construction Impacts & Shadows

What will happen to the people incarcerated in Brooklyn’s existing 800+ bed detention complex, or Manhattan’s existing 1000+ bed detention complex, or the 600+ bed Vernon J. Bain jail boat during construction of these new jails? This is an especially pressing issue in Brooklyn, where the city is proposing to build the new jail in the location of the existing jail.

Will they be sent to Rikers while this massive construction project is underway? Or, worse, will the remodeling work around people incarcerated there, subjecting them to unbearable noise and light pollution, and the harmful air pollutants of heavy construction? Both of these possibilities are utterly unacceptable.

People are “sunlight sensitive resources.” Everyone, whether living and working in the surrounding area or locked up inside the jail, will be in its shadow.

Transportation

The six train runs right under the proposed site for the new Bronx jail, which has been cleared for construction 100 feet below street level. This will put further stress on a crumbling subway system, in a borough already underserved by public transportation.

For New York's working poor, MTA interruptions are more than inconvenient. Being late to a wage job costs money in the form of lost wages, and puts workers at risk of discipline (lost shifts for example) and termination.

What if the NYPD decides to escalate its arrests? With 4 facilities of 1510 beds each, incarcerated people will suffer the stress and vulnerability to violence of being shipped around the city, far from the

courthouses they'll be made to appear in, and far from their families. This plan is one mayoral election away from becoming a system of overcrowded facilities constantly moving incarcerated people around the city in order to make room for newly-arrested people.

Overcrowding and transportation problems are why the Vernon Bain jail boat was built (for \$161 million) in 1992. Transportation of jailed people is dangerous, traumatic, and costly. Any plan that decentralizes jails and reduces the number of jail beds without dealing with the source of jailed persons—the NYPD—leaves itself open to a logistical disaster, suffered most acutely by jailed and imprisoned people and their families.

The “borough-based” jail proposal includes a “centralized care space” in the Queens facility, which will provide “centralized infirmary and maternity ward services” for the whole borough-based system. This means that if you are sick or pregnant you will likely be relocated to the facility in Queens, regardless of where your community or your loved ones are located.

Although the City says that the borough-based jail plan will bring incarcerated people closer to their communities, there is no guarantee that people will be incarcerated near their loved ones, because what determines where someone is incarcerated is the system, not family or individual needs.

All data and facts about the proposed jails come from NYC's publicly-available plans:

- “New York City Borough-Based Jail System Draft Scope of Work to Prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement” CEQR No. 18DOC001Y
- “Borough Based Jails Master Plan: Steering New York City toward a smaller, safer, and fairer justice system” [Press Deck]
- <https://rikers.cityofnewyork.us/the-plan/>

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**JAILS,
LAND USE,
& PUBLIC
POLICY**

**New York City should use public
land for the public good.**

Prioritizing jails in how we use and zone urban land guarantees that our city’s public policy will be driven by incarceration and punishment, rather than community healing and restorative justice.

The Borough-Based Jail System Scope of Work states that the proposed jails will provide “added value and benefits to the surrounding neighborhoods ... and serve as civic assets in the neighborhoods”¹.

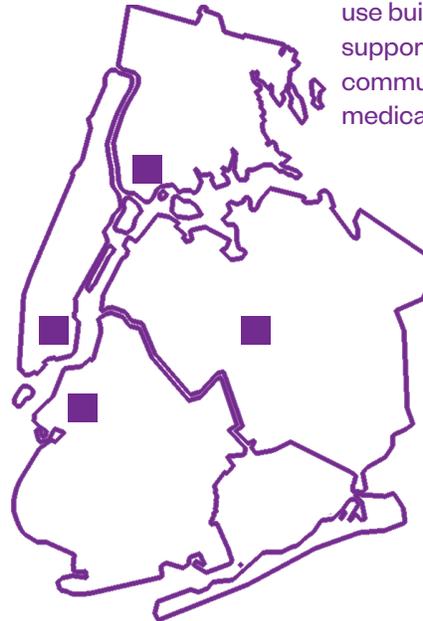
We want civic assets without cages, in our neighborhoods. Community members in Kew Gardens, Mott Haven, Downtown Brooklyn, and Chinatown objected to the borough based jail plan because it would re-configure neighborhood space, density, traffic, and land use without providing real solutions to the neighborhood’s issues.

NYC’s neighborhoods are currently unevenly resourced and facing different economic, political, and social pressure. The city should re-zone and redevelop land based on community needs.

Chinatown: The proposed development at 125 White Street, the Manhattan Detention Complex, will triple the size of the current complex: from 12 floors to 50 floors. If the city is going to redevelop Chinatown, why not build rent-controlled apartment complexes with housing priority for Chinatown residents; a larger, dedicated space for the Museum of Chinese in America; and low-cost space for community and immigrants’ rights organizations?

Downtown Brooklyn: The city proposes to rezone this for a building height of 430 ft and beds for 1,500 people. If the city wants to house 1,500 people in Downtown Brooklyn, why not build housing that is truly affordable for working-class New Yorkers? Already zoned for mixed-use, this facility could provide the services that working class families need to raise healthy and happy children (including childcare, decent food, recreational space, and medical care).

Mott Haven, Bronx: The city proposes to rezone this location to allow for beds for 1,500 people and a maximum building height of 275 feet. If the city would like to house 1,500 people in Mott Haven in a 275 foot mixed-use building, why not build a supportive-housing complex with community-accessible social and medical services?



Kew Gardens, Queens: The city proposes to increase the location’s size from 497,600 gross square feet to 1,910,000 gross square feet and increase its height to 310 feet. If the city wants to build a massive complex almost double the size of the current Queens Detention Complex in Kew Gardens, why doesn’t it build a new high school with integrated community services (daycare, healthcare, an adult or continuing education learning center) to replace Jamaica High²?

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Space for large public projects (that don't disrupt or displace communities) is at a premium.

The city should not devote more land to incarceration; the city should devote public land to the public good. The public good isn't served by jails, whether those jails are on Rikers Island, or in Brooklyn, Queens, the Bronx, and Manhattan.

Private development pushes working class people out of their communities, neighborhoods, and homes. There are currently 62,000 homeless people ⁴ in the city, including 15,000 families with 20,000 children. Additionally, poor people are overrepresented in jails and prisons ³. Gentrification, lack of affordable housing, and the criminalization of poverty go hand-in-hand. The city should prioritize using land to solve the housing crisis.

There is no way to make a jail harmonious with neighborhoods. Jails don't harmonize, they disrupt. They teach our communities that urban space is better devoted to incarceration than to the community resources that prevent incarceration. They teach our communities that we should tolerate massive, disruptive monuments to jailing in our neighborhoods.

To what use is the city going to put Rikers Island when the 10 jails there are closed? We need a clear plan from the city to devote public land to the public good, not private developers and real estate interests. The Lippman Commission's proposed expansion of LaGuardia airport onto Rikers Island does not count as a "public good." ⁵

Let's change city policies that perpetuate incarceration.

New Yorkers are saying that the public good isn't served by incarceration and jail building, and in developing public policy, the city needs to listen to our voices.

To truly move away from mass incarceration, we need public policy devoted to decarceration. We need to stop devoting resources to policing, courts, and jails. A principle goal of NYC public policy should be redressing unfairness within the criminal justice system, not building more jails to hold working-class Black and Latinx New Yorkers on unfair, petty cases stemming from racist NYPD broken windows policing.

Recently instituted policing reforms are too little, too late⁷. We need immediate changes to NYC criminal laws and policing practices that target immigrants, people with mental illness, people of color, and poor people by decriminalizing: drug use; sex work; and poverty (including petty theft, turnstile jumping, trespassing in public parks). We need to divert resources from the NYPD toward the community-based programs that actually keep our families, loved ones, and neighbors safe from harm.

New York City is divided by geopolitical borders (boroughs and police precincts) that have consequences for when and how people come into contact with the criminal justice system and the outcomes (arrest, prosecution, and punishment) they face. New Yorkers are disparately impacted by policing and prosecutorial decisions to charge or dismiss solely due to where they live, work, hang out, or get on the train ⁸.

A fair and just New York City for all New Yorkers means devoting public space to community resources and deprioritizing policing and punishment.

#NoNewJailsNYC is a multiracial, intergenerational network of residents, community members, and activists fighting against the Mayor's racist jail construction plan in NYC. Data compiled by the #NoNewJails Research Working Group.

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