



AIA New York Statement on the Borough Correctional Facilities

October 11, 2018

The proposed borough correctional facilities that are to replace Rikers Island are incredibly sensitive projects, where considerations regarding work quality, neighborhood integration, and safety must be primary concerns. Rikers Island is widely considered to be flawed in its design; it is essential that the new facilities not repeat past mistakes.

When New York City was given design-build (D-B) authority by the State for the construction of the new borough correctional facilities, it brought up many questions about the benefits of using design-build for jail construction.

AIA New York recommends that the City follow these best practices when using design-build authority to construct the borough correctional facilities:

- **The architect should report directly to the client.** This will prevent design decisions about safety or quality of life from being overlooked due to cost or time savings.
- To ensure quality, **use a two-step process to select the D-B team:** request for qualifications (RFQ) followed by request for proposals (RFP) from shortlisted firms. Contractors and design professionals should have experience in design-build or jail design/construction, or ideally both. Stipends should be provided to incentivize firms to respond to the RFQ.
- **Hire a “criteria architect” to work with stakeholders** to help determine programming. The criteria architect should be separate from the D-B team, hired directly by the City, and should remain throughout the entirety of the project. A major part of this role is to build trust with the community and local officials, ensuring that they are included in discussions about architectural programming.
- **The City needs to minimize delays at all costs**, as the entire D-B team is working on the same schedule. To stay on schedule, the City should employ an attorney with significant D-B experience to handle contracts and approvals.
- **A manual on D-B should be available for reference** so the D-B team understands the parameters and expectations of D-B work in New York City, including the role of the community in the projects.

This unique opportunity to physically redesign our correctional system offers a chance to solve the design problems seen in Rikers Island. To provide the maximum benefit to community members, detainees, and city workers, it is imperative that the City follow the aforementioned best practices.

Sincerely,

Gerard F. X. Geier II, FAIA, FIIDA, LEED AP
President

Benjamin Prosky, Assoc. AIA
Executive Director

The American Institute of Architects

AIA New York
536 LaGuardia Place
New York, NY 10012

T (212) 683 0023

F (212) 696 5022

www.aiany.org

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