



## **New York Building Congress releases Rikers Island report**

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New York, NY The New York Building Congress released a report examining the future of Rikers Island, outlining ambitious proposals for development and construction following the jail facilities' expected closure in 2027. *Building the Future of New York: Rikers Island* urges the consideration of land uses that enhance New York's environmental, economic and social future for long-term, regional needs.

Closing the jail facilities on Rikers Island is a necessary step to reform the city's criminal justice system. The city's plan to reduce the current jail population, close Rikers Island's facilities and relocate the remaining jail population to borough-based jails creates an opportunity for a more humane and effective justice system in the city.

Rikers Island also offers a chance to meet the built environment needs of New Yorkers. The island is more than 400 acres and has a utility network that could be integrated into existing sewer, waste and power systems or safely support a variety of activities, including those that require large plots of land and are sensitive to environmental disruptions.

"Closing Rikers Island's jail facilities not only brings our city toward justice and peace, but it also presents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to design, develop and build at a tremendous scale in New York," said Carlo Scissura, president and CEO of the New York Building Congress. "We must think big and act now to redevelop Rikers Island to meet the needs of New Yorkers and transform a dark stain on our history into something that creates significant benefits for our communities."

The Rikers Island report is part of the Building Congress' *Building the Future of New York* series, which urges policy makers and the public to return to a spirit of aspirational planning and building by proposing substantive projects and significant administrative reforms that could engender a new century of growth and success.

Bearing in mind the site conditions and restrictions on Rikers Island, including limited accessibility, proximity to LaGuardia Airport and landfill space, the New York Building Congress has determined a list of feasible reuse options that advance equity and sustainability and promote public good.

Concepts from the report for the future of Rikers Island include:

Infrastructure, such as a solar field or battery storage facility to help New York transition toward

renewable energy and achieve carbon neutrality by 2050; a more efficient wastewater treatment facility than older ones currently in use; or a modern composting site and waste-to-energy facility that would help the City achieve its commitment to zero waste by 2030.

Industry, including an industrial and manufacturing hub on Rikers Island to create middle-class jobs and provide affordable space for New York's maker community; a green industry research campus to advance New York City as a global leader in sustainability; or a job training and certification site to prepare New Yorkers for careers in green industries or manufacturing and promote inclusive economic growth.

Open Space, Parks & Recreation, such as public spaces for walking, picnicking and enjoying nature or recreational facilities like sports fields, playgrounds and a greenway.

Residential and Mixed-Use, including a combination of single-family and multi-family units to increase the overall housing supply and help the City achieve its goal of adding 300,000 affordable units by 2026, or social infrastructure like k-12 academic, healthcare and cultural institutions and commercial spaces like retail, offices and restaurants.

Transportation, like pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure or larger public transit investments to increase access to the island, like a redesigned bus route running through northern Queens to include stops on Rikers Island.