



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Velmanette Montgomery

Senator Montgomery, Senator Kavanagh and Assemblywoman Simon call on Mayor de Blasio to withdraw the draft scope of work for the Brooklyn House of Detention

SENATOR VELMANETTE MONTGOMERY September 26, 2018

| ISSUE: **BROOKLYN HOUSE OF DETENTION, CLOSE RIKERS, CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM, END MASS INCARCERATION, REVISIONING THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM**

Senator Velmanette Montgomery, Senator Brian Kavanagh and Assemblywoman Jo Anne Simon call on Mayor de Blasio to withdraw the Draft Scope of Work for the Brooklyn House of Detention.

In the letter, the elected officials detail their concerns:

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We write with regard to the current proposal to expand the Brooklyn House of Detention (BHOD) as part of New York City's plans to close Rikers Island Correctional Facility and remake the City's approach to corrections to be smaller, safer, and fairer as recommended by the Independent Commission on New York City Criminal Justice and Incarceration Reform, a/k/a the Lippman Commission. We write to request that the draft scope be withdrawn and that the public be actively engaged before releasing a revised scope.

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First and foremost, we want to be very clear that we endorse wholeheartedly the vision of closing Rikers Island and moving to a system of smaller, safer community-based jails. In that we are united with the communities, who overwhelmingly support the closure of Rikers and who accept the premise that the BHOD needs to be reconstructed to further the goal envisioned by the Lippman Commission. We are all committed to working towards justice for all New Yorkers.

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In that vein, we have been calling for a robust public engagement process, which we believe should have started in advance of the development of a scoping document. Our desire for robust communication was undermined early in the process, in February, when the city revealed that instead of engaging each community, we would be subject to an unprecedented joint ULURP. Still, we believe that more community engagement would have led to a better scope. To that end, we organized a well-attended panel presentation in March 2018 to kick-off community education and engagement. Unfortunately, the City did not take advantage of the positive interest and momentum created at that meeting to actively include the public in its thinking and planning for the related environmental and land use planning processes. Between March and August, when the scoping documents were released, the City made little to no effort to engage the community, although our communities were more than willing to sit down with the City.

To read the full letter, download of the PDF.

For more information, visit:

<https://www.nysenate.gov/newsroom/articles/velmanette-montgomery/senator-montgomerys-statement-new-york-city-borough-based>

<https://www.nysenate.gov/newsroom/in-the-news/velmanette-montgomery/brooklynites-fume-over-lack-community-input-jail-planning>

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