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INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS  
OFFICE OF DIRECTOR



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
THE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL  
CITY HALL  
NEW YORK, N. Y. 10007

CAROL BELLAMY  
PRESIDENT

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M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Margaret Boepple  
Rosemary Ginty

FROM: Carol Bellamy *Carol*

RE: White Street Juvenile and Adult  
Detention Facility

DATE: November 17, 1982

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I am writing to summarize my concerns regarding the proposed siting of the Manhattan adult and juvenile detention facilities.

While the general proposal has been public knowledge for a considerable period of time, it was not until the City Planning Commission began hearings that the specific plans, cost estimates and co-location with the juvenile facility were finalized. In the past month considerable effort has been made to review and analyze the proposal presently before the Board of Estimate. There have been a series of meetings and extensive discussions with representatives of the various City agencies involved, so that the specifics of the plan and the legal options available to us could be clarified. I wish to thank the administration for the cooperation and candor of many of its representatives in responding to the myriad questions that the siting of a detention facility in a dense urban area presents. I also wish to acknowledge the valuable work of the interested citizens' groups and community members in responsibly articulating many of the questions.

The issues raised by the proposal before us, have profound legal, financial, and social implications. An incomplete analysis of available options might pose serious consequences for decades to come to our criminal justice

system, our budget, the economic vitality of an important New York City business and residential community, as well as to the fairness and humanity with which we treat our criminal detention population, awaiting adjudication. Therefore, at this juncture, I am sharing with you some of my conclusions, my misgivings and my continuing questions.

First, I will reiterate my opposition to the co-location of an adult and juvenile detention facility. Briefly, the necessity of providing physical separation of "sight and sound" has vastly inflated the costs of the proposed juvenile facility. The guarantee that this separation will be respected, a basic legal tenet of humane juvenile detention, ultimately rests with the continued commitment of the Correction and Juvenile Commissioners of future administrations. So that despite the enormous outlay of additional capital costs, the possibility of mixing the populations as an expedient solution to future overcrowding emergencies remains.

The savings in operating co-located facilities are questionable since much of the staffing levels are legally mandated. In fact the need to artificially separate the facilities results in cumbersome solutions such as busing the juvenile offenders to the criminal court next door, because they can't use the underground tunnel proposed for adults. The inappropriateness of the centralized juvenile facility is underscored by the fact that it doesn't meet the recommendations of two Mayoral Commissions stressing decentralization and family accessibility. More importantly, required licensing by the State Department for Youth is highly uncertain, for many of the same reasons I state.

Should the juvenile portion be deleted, my conclusion regarding an adult facility on White Street is less clear cut. We were assured by the Department of Corrections that a Manhattan facility was legally mandated by United States District Court Judge Lasker, in Benjamin vs. Malcolm. As a result of legal research done by lawyers for the community, my own staff and confirmed by the Law Department only last Friday, there is no final directive to build another detention facility in Manhattan. It appears that the court would consider a plan for a vastly upgraded Rikers Island facility.

A 1980 LOBR study on the costs of renovating the Rikers Men's House of Detention to constitutionally mandated levels found that a 900 bed facility would cost \$31,000.00 per cell in 1980; \$38,333.00 in 1982 and \$53,333.00 in 1985; as contrasted with the proposed facility at approximately

\$150,000.00 per cell, inflated by a site acquisition cost. A more recent study commissioned by OMB, DOC, the Law Department and DGS, determined that a 500 bed renovation would cost \$83,600 per cell. In light of the lost opportunity posed by acquiring this privately owned site, the value of lost tax revenues and possible commercial and other mixed use potentials, the actual cost of building on White Street may in fact be considerably higher.

These studies have not been formally presented as an alternative to the Board of Estimate nor as I understand it, to the court. Neither have I seen plans and cost estimates for upgrading services and accessibility to a renovated Rikers facility, commensurate with legal and humane standards. I am disturbed by this failure to develop options or to explain why an upgraded Rikers facility is not a feasible alternative, financially or operationally, even though it now appears to be a legal option.

Finally, I remain concerned about the coordination of siting the detention facility with Bank Leumi's site across the street. While I understand that the Bank Leumi location presents additional problems regarding tax incentives, its concerns regarding the configuration of the detention center deserve review to determine whether they can be reasonably met so that approximately 500 jobs may be retained.

In conclusion then, I cannot support the present proposal co-locating the juvenile facility. My support for an adult facility on White Street is dependent on a comprehensive analysis of an upgraded Rikers facility and its comparison to the White Street proposal. I recognize that the analysis I request is time consuming. I wish that we had been properly advised sooner regarding our legal options, and that alternatives would have been presented and examined earlier.

CB:jt

cc: Honorable Nathan Leventhal