



**Corrections and
Community Supervision**



**GOWANUS
UNITED:**

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Department of Corrections and Community Supervision, Attorney General's Office and Gowanus United Announce Brooklyn Parole Office Relocation Settlement

***Elected Officials, Gowanus United, Gowanus Small Business Coalition, and Brooklyn
Community Board 6 Laud Constructive Dialogue with the State Department of
Corrections and Community Supervision to Reduce Impact of Parole Facility***

Brooklyn, NY – The Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS), the Attorney General's Office, which provided legal assistance to DOCCS, and Gowanus United, a community-based coalition of area residents and business owners, today announced that they have reached a legal settlement regarding the operation of a parole facility at 15 Second Avenue in Gowanus, Brooklyn.

Gowanus United and area residents have agreed to discontinue their legal action against NYS DOCCS, the New York State Office of General Services (NYS OGS) and the City of New York, in response to an agreement by DOCCS to significantly reduce the number of parolees reporting to the facility.

Under the agreement, the number of parolees reporting to the Gowanus facility will be reduced from 6,000 to 2,000 for a minimum of two years. To serve people on parole who will not be reporting to the Gowanus facility, DOCCS will introduce a program to decentralize reporting locations in Brooklyn. This program will establish DOCCS community reporting sites in neighborhoods throughout the borough, making it easier for parolees to meet the conditions of their parole.

Further, NYS DOCCS has agreed to meet on a regular basis with representatives from Gowanus United, Community Board 6, the 78th Police Precinct, and the Gowanus Alliance (the latter being an organization representing a wide swath of the local business community). These meetings will provide a forum for discussing any issues pertaining to DOCCS's ongoing operation of the facility at 15 Second Avenue. DOCCS has agreed to provide statistics on an ongoing basis regarding the number of parolees assigned to report to the facility.

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Acting Corrections and Community Supervision Commissioner Anthony J. Annucci said, "This is an excellent example of government working with the people to find a solution everyone can be proud of. We heard the concerns of the community and we responded. I am pleased that we could come together and work as a team to serve the needs of our Parole population and also allow the citizens of Gowanus to feel safe at home."

Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman said, "Members of the Gowanus community and the State of New York share a strong interest in supporting this vibrant Brooklyn neighborhood. We also share a strong interest in ensuring the successful re-entry of those under parole supervision into society. I am pleased that, by working together, members of the Gowanus community and the state have found a resolution to this matter that well-serves our mutual interests."

Adine Schuman-Pusey, Gowanus United Executive Committee member, said, "Gowanus United is pleased that DOCCS is substantially decreasing the number of parole visits in Gowanus. This decision is good for people on parole and responds to our initial opposition to the outsized parole mega-site originally proposed for the neighborhood without community input. The people of Gowanus are known for our diversity, as well as being good neighbors. We look forward to an open and productive relationship with our newest neighbor at 15 Second Avenue."

Paul Basile, member of the Gowanus Small Business Coalition and President of the Gowanus Alliance, said, "Business owners in Gowanus have deep roots here and have made and continue to make significant investments that create jobs in the neighborhood and promote a productive business environment while helping to look after our community. Faced with the initial size and scope of the parole facility, neighborhood businesses stepped up to the plate, mobilizing quickly to spread the word and assemble the resources necessary to get our community's voice heard. We are gratified that NYS DOCCS listened, and we look forward to continuing this dialogue as we move beyond this settlement to the actual operation of the DOCCS center."

Tom Herzog, Deputy Commissioner for Community Supervision said, "The seamless transition of parolees to their home communities, as well as effective supervision plans developed by our Parole Officers, is best done when we have good community partners who share our interest in assisting offenders in becoming good citizens and neighbors. We look forward to working with our new community members as well as our previous service providers in areas throughout Brooklyn in the neighborhoods where the parolees reside."

Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams said, "Compromise and civil conversation are the cornerstones of a healthy democracy, and the Gowanus community is stronger today because of the efforts we have taken together to address the concerns of the parole facility that will be operating in that neighborhood. This settlement is a big step in the right direction, and my office stands ready to assist both DOCCS and the stakeholders in Gowanus to ensure not only that the effects on the Gowanus neighborhood are minimized, but that Brooklynites on parole have the support they need to move ahead in life."

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"This is a real win/win: for the Gowanus community, for parolees, and for better criminal justice policy," said New York City Council Member Brad Lander. "I applaud the residents and business owners of Gowanus. They said they would do their fair-share, and they proved it today, agreeing to welcome a center serving Brooklyn's parolees, while winning dramatic improvements to the State's plan. I am enthusiastic about DOCCS providing support to ex-offenders in a range of locations around the borough, with local partners, closer to where parolees live and work."

Craig Hammerman, District Manager of Brooklyn Community Board 6 said, "Being a good neighbor means sometimes borrowing a cup of sugar and sometimes lending one. There has to be some give and take. When government and community work together, we can accomplish great things; it's always refreshing to be a part of that. This outcome gives us every reason to be hopeful and optimistic."

According to recent data, community supervision is an effective reentry strategy; only three percent of all Brooklyn arrests in 2013 were attributed to parolees and less than 10 percent of individuals convicted from Kings County were recommitted to DOCCS custody with new felonies within three years after their initial release, which is consistent with statewide rates for recommitment.

Gowanus United, a 501 (c) (4) organization, was formed to raise public awareness regarding critical issues affecting the Gowanus area, which includes the citing of the DOCCS facility. For more information on Gowanus United, go to <http://gowanusunited.org>.

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