



Ashanti Hamilton
City of Milwaukee Common Council

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Community voices must be heard before final decision on Youth Justice Facility

Statement of Common Council President Ashanti Hamilton March 12, 2019

The State Department of Corrections has announced that they would be taking unilateral action to acquire the plot of land at 6600 N. Teutonia Ave. for a State-run Youth Justice Facility. This decision was made without input from my office, the community or Milwaukee County and no further details have been provided about this facility. It is hard to imagine that a decision made without community input can bring about the results that the community wants.

Whenever a major decision for District 1 emerges, my office is intentional about taking resident input very seriously and using it to inform our actions. I am demanding that the State not bypass this process entirely and share their plan as soon as possible.

The scheduled closures of Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake and the creation of the County's Project Rise initiative show a movement toward restorative practices for our youth offenders. The County was transparent about their proposed facilities and they listened intently to resident concerns at several events throughout our neighborhoods. We don't know if this vision is shared by the State, as they never provided a presence at these discussions. What we do know is that it is impossible to have dialogue without the community involved and it is imperative that the State be as forthcoming as the County has been.

This coming **Thursday, March 14th** (at 6 p.m. at **MacPyles Corp., 6737 N. Teutonia Ave.**), we have a meeting scheduled to discuss the County's proposal for the site. With this news, we will now be using this time and space to share our concerns and questions with the State. I have insisted that a representative for the State be present and ready to provide information. The County will also have representatives on hand to answer questions and address concerns.

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If we can come together to have an open, productive discussion about the DNC coming to Milwaukee, we should be able to exhibit the same collaborative effort to alleviate the disparities that exist in the city rather than falling back on the same tactics that created the disparities in the first place. Thursday will be our chance to get answers about the facility and I hope to see you all there.

We need your voices to make sure that we have input in this decision and the State's decisions going forward.

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