

Community Action Alliance on NYU 2031

c/o 232 East 11th Street, New York, NY 10003

15 Washington Place Tenants' Committee

200 Mercer Street Board

505 LaGuardia Place Board

77 Bleecker Street Board

88 Bleecker Street Board

Bleecker Area Merchants and Residents Association

Central Village Block Association

Downtown Independent Democrats

East 10th Street Block Association

East Square Neighbors

Friends of NoHo

Greenwich Village Block Associations

Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation

Horatio Street Association

LaGuardia Corner Gardens

Mercer-Houston Dog Run Association

Mercer Street Block Association

Mulry Angle/West 11th Street Block Association

Perry Street Block Association

Public School Parents Advocacy Committee

Superblocks Coalition

Village Residents Alliance

Washington Place Block Association

Washington Square Village Tenants Association

West 10th Street Block Association

West 12th Street Block Association

West 13th Street Block Association

August 26, 2010

Hon. Michael Bloomberg, Mayor
Hon. Scott Stringer, Manhattan Borough President
Hon. Amanda Burden, Director, New York City Department of City Planning
Hon. Adrian Benepe, Commissioner, Department of Parks and Recreation
Hon. Janette Sadik-Khan, Commissioner, Department of Transportation
Hon. Jo Hamilton, Community Board 2 Chair

Re: Preserving City-Owned Open Space as Parkland on Mercer Street, LaGuardia Place, and Bleecker Street

Dear Mayor Bloomberg, Borough President Stringer, Director Burden, Commissioner Benepe, Commissioner Sadik-Khan, and Chair Hamilton:

We formally request the transfer of the city-owned strips along Mercer Street and LaGuardia Place, as well as the strips between Mercer and LaGuardia on Bleecker and West Third Streets, to be completed by remapping the land from roadbed to parkland. The future jurisdiction would be New York City Department of Parks and Recreation.

This transfer process was voted and approved as early as 1967 by the City Planning Commission, the Manhattan Borough President and Community Board 2. Because the approved transfer was never completed, documentation shows subsequent resolutions in 1979, 1995, and 2004. According to past Parks Commissioner Henry Stern, "NYU won't grant consent and is blocking the move." *The Villager*, "Strip Poker on superblocks, does NYU hold the cards?" 6/23-29, 2004

These strips supplement the only nearby public park and playground at Washington Square. Central downtown Manhattan is underserved by park space, with Community Board 2 having only .04 acres of open space per thousand people, the second lowest amount of open space in Manhattan, well below the benchmark of 2.5 acres per thousand people.*

These strips are approximately 2.4 acres of open green space, covered by parks, playgrounds, a community dog run and community created gardens. Over a period of 30 years, community residents banded together to create and maintain these public facilities. They are used by thousands of community residents and visitors each year. Besides amenities such as a dog run and children's play areas, they offer a mature overhang of foliage, fruit trees and urban wildlife. School children from nearby Children's Aid Society, Little Red Schoolhouse, PS 41, Cooke Academy, and Blue Man School are taught about food production in a program offered by volunteer community gardeners.

We fear that the city intends to sell this land to NYU, or use the roadbed for construction hosting areas, or 'trade' these strips for community amenities elsewhere. None of these options is acceptable.

(continued)

Instead the City of New York should embrace this request for protection as consistent with Mayor Bloomberg's visionary urban-environmental plan: *PlaNYC--A Greener, Greater New York*, and preserve this greenbelt with 60+ mature trees. The strips were created with the sweat equity of a neighborhood, and are a tribute to the principles of Jane Jacobs and many urban planners who have followed.

We request that the Mercer and LaGuardia and Bleecker strips be swiftly transferred to permanently protected parkland and open space. Responses to this letter may be directed through Ellen Horan, at horanel@aol.com or 917-742-2370.

Sincerely,



Constance Dondore, Coordinator
15 Washington Place Tenants' Committee



Andrew Amer
200 Mercer Street Board



Patricia Albin, President
505 LaGuardia Place Board



Terri Cude
77 Bleecker Street Board



Lee Schwartz
88 Bleecker Street Liaison



Judith Callet, Resident Chair
Bleecker Area Merchants and Residents Association



David Handler, Merchants Chair
Bleecker Area Merchants and Residents Association



Sugar Barry, Co-President
East 10th Street Block Association



Mary Johnson, Coordinator
East Square Neighbors

(continued)

Lawrence B. Goldberg

Lawrence B. Goldberg, President
Friends of LaGuardia Place

Jeanne Wilcke

Jeanne Wilcke, Chair
Friends of NoHo

Martin Tessler

Martin Tessler
Greenwich Village Block Associations

Andrew Berman

Andrew Berman, Executive Director
Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation

Marjorie Colt

Marjorie Colt, Vice-President
Horatio Street Association

Ellen Horan

Ellen Horan
LaGuardia Corner Gardens

Enid Braun

Enid Braun
LMNO(P)/Mercer Playground

Beth Gottlieb

Beth Gottlieb, President
Mercer-Houston Dog Run Association

Elaine Hudson

Elaine Hudson, President
Mercer Street Block Association

Gerald Banu

Gerald Banu, President
Perry Street Block Association

Raymond W. Cline

Raymond W. Cline
Superblocks Coalition

(continued)

Anne Hearn

Anne Hearn, Co-President
Washington Square Village Tenants Association

Allan Horland

Allan Horland, Co-President
Washington Square Village Tenants Association

Carol Greitzer

Carol Greitzer, Co-President
West 12th Street Block Association

Cc: City Council Speaker Christine Quinn
City Councilmember Margaret Chin

**source: Manhattan Community Board 2: Open Space Project, 2008*