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## COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 2, MANHATTAN

3 WASHINGTON SQUARE VILLAGE

NEW YORK, NY 10012-1899

[www.cb2manhattan.org](http://www.cb2manhattan.org)

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June 20, 2014

William T. Castro, Manhattan Borough Commissioner  
Arsenal West, 24 West 61st Street, 5th Floor  
New York, NY 10023

Dear Borough Commissioner Castro:

At its Full Board Committee meeting on June 19, 2014, Community Board #2, Manhattan adopted the following resolution:

### WHEREAS

1. DeSalvio was last renovated in 1995 and is run-down and poorly serves a growing population of families with children who must walk up to ten blocks to visit other downtown parks such as Vesuvio Playground, Hester Street Playground, Washington Square Park, the Key Park and the newly-opened Minetta Playground;
2. Renovation of this park has been included as a high priority of the CB2 Parks committee in the CB2 Statement of Needs document for several years;
3. There is currently \$1.9 million allocated to the renovation with funds provided by City Council Member Margaret Chin (\$550k FY 2012 and \$70k FY 2013), by former City Council Speaker Christine Quinn (\$305k in FY 2014) and by former Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer (\$375k in FY2013 and \$600k in FY2014);
4. A site scope meeting was held in the park on October 1, 2012, and a design by NYC Parks was presented to CB2 on June 4, 2014;
5. Downtown Manhattan is experiencing an explosion of population of families with young and school-aged children;
6. Many playgrounds in CB2 are frequently overcrowded and the nearby Key Park's future is uncertain;
7. The park is used by a variety of people throughout the day, including children, adults, and tourists;
8. The Parks Department officially designates DeSalvio a "playground," thus triggering the citywide rule that adults must be accompanied by a child, but the layout has never featured a separation between adult use and child play areas;
9. The interior of the park along Spring Street is lined with game and lunch tables that remain in

good condition and are heavily used by the local community;

10. There are numerous healthy large trees in this park;

11. The 2012 scoping session included the following requests:

- A re-imagined layout that maximizes square footage, softens lines using curved or rounded shapes to divide spaces and takes advantage of large blank walls by adding a climbing wall, a trellis for vines or chalkboard paint.
- New play equipment for the three age groups currently served by DeSalvio (under 2, 2-10 and preteen), incorporating challenging climbing equipment--possibly including a zip-line-- a climbing wall and a tire swing; and a small area on northwest side for younger children with infant/toddler swings and 2 spinners or toddler bouncers.
- New concrete pavement.
- New modern safety flooring that can be power-washed.
- A half basketball court with new regulation lines, upgraded backboard, lighting and possibly the addition of a lower hoop for young children off to the side.
- Sectioned-off seating along Spring Street using a creative combination of planter boxes, benches and low fences to separate adult use and child play areas.
- Small, maintainable plantings, ideally in planter boxes, but no shrubs that block the views through the park and no extended planting areas that provide cover for rodents (including grasses and cypress), or take space away from use for children's play.
- Addition of a latch to the gate at the single playground entrance to allow easy opening and closure of the gate and to protect small children from exiting unescorted onto Spring Street.
- A new spray shower, preferably with a) nozzles that are flush to the pavement so the area has no obstructions when the shower is not in use, b) a creative waterflow providing a more interactive play experience and c) a timer and reactivation button to reduce water consumption when the sprinklers are not in use by children. (Chelsea Waterside Park and West Thames Park as well as Pier 25 all have strong examples of creative water features.)
- No tree removals.
- Ample seating accessible to all park visitors. However, all benches in the rear southwest corner of the park should be removed, since seating in this most remote corner of the park might encourage loitering in the park by questionable adults who engage in many of the prohibited uses as outlined in Section 1.04 of NYC Parks Department Rules.

12. NYC Parks Dept. presented a design that incorporated many of features requested by the community and the overall design was well received by the community, we are requesting the following modifications to the design presented June 4, 2014:

- Bright colors including blue, green and yellow to be considered for safety surface flooring rather than grey (unless it is determined that grey looks cleaner for longer).
- Additional interactive water feature elements to be considered as requested in the original resolution ("A new spray shower, preferably with a) nozzles that are flush to the pavement so the area has no obstructions when the shower is not in use, b) a creative water flow providing a more interactive play experience and c) a timer and reactivation button to reduce water consumption when the sprinklers are not in use by children.")
- Removal of the plantings and fence at the north end of basketball court to allow for more open space and clear sight lines for safety.
- Addition of painted images on back wall of basketball court to encourage multi-sport usage (i.e. soccer and hockey goals).
- Plantings that will not attract pests.
- Benches designed to prevent lounging or sleeping, plus relocation of the first two benches on eastern wall, perhaps facing the benches closer to Mulberry Street.
- Greenery planted in place of removed benches.
- Addition of a low, latched gate at the western playground entrance to prevent small

- children from exiting unescorted onto Spring Street.
- Rat proof garbage cans positioned outside the playground.

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT COMMUNITY BOARD 2 MANHATTAN**

1. Appreciates and approves the design effort NYC Parks has made regarding DeSalvio Playground while challenging the design team to further improve the design as detailed above while minimizing any delays to the timeline to begin construction.

**VOTE: Unanimous, with 38 Board Members in favor.**

Please advise us of any decision or action taken in response to this resolution.

Sincerely,



David Gruber, Chair  
Community Board #2, Manhattan



Richard Caccappolo, Chair  
Parks, Recreation & Open Space Committee  
Community Board #2, Manhattan

DG/EM

- c: Hon. Nydia Velasquez, Congresswoman  
Hon. Daniel L. Squadron, NY State Senator  
Hon. Sheldon Silver, Assembly Speaker  
Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President  
Hon. Margaret Chin, Council Member

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June 20, 2014

Emily Lloyd, Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection  
59-17 Junction Boulevard, 13th Floor  
Flushing, NY 11373

Dear Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Lloyd:

At its Full Board Committee meeting on June 19, 2014, Community Board #2, Manhattan adopted the following resolution:

### WHEREAS

1. The Department of Environmental Protection presented a design for a ten-foot high wrought iron fence between Water Tunnel Shaft 31B site and the adjacent sidewalk;
2. The site is adjacent to the east side of the Merchant's House Museum on the north side of East 4<sup>th</sup> Street between The Bowery and Lafayette Street;
3. Since the initial planning for this site about 15 years ago, DEP expressed its intent, upon completion of work to the water tunnel shaft, to make parts of the site available for public open space to be administered by the Department of Parks.
4. In August, 2009, DEP presented a set of sketches showing expected "open space layouts for four shaft sites in Manhattan, including 31B";
5. DEP expressed the view that public open space provided a way to "hide the sites in clear view" and laid out certain use restrictions, including limited locations for trees, clear access for DEP vehicles, and a prohibition on use for dog runs;
6. During prior discussions regarding the site, the Merchant's House expressed interest in a connection between the open space and the museum;
7. This fence was first presented to the CB2 Environment Committee as an interim installation to replace the unattractive construction fence for the period until the open space could be designed and built;
8. Responding to concerns about the waste of installing a fence without first designing the open space, DEP now states that they have decided that the space is unsuitable for open space and the fence is intended to be permanent;
9. DEP appears to have made the decision to cancel the planned use of the site without consultation with CB2 or council members;

10. The only explanation as to why the site is now considered unsuitable is that it has no “walkthrough” and that policies have changed after September 11, 2001;
11. Other shaft sites constructed after 9/11/2001, are located under streets and sidewalks;
12. The lack of public open space is a concern for CB2, which has one of the lowest ratios of open space to population in the city;
13. The area around this particular site is characterized by an extreme lack of public open space, even by CB2 standards;
14. The large fenced-in vacant lot will be a permanent detriment to the block and to adjacent buildings.

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT COMMUNITY BOARD 2 MANHATTAN**

1. Is dismayed that DEP has unilaterally cancelled an important agreement made during the public planning process for the location of shaft sites;
2. Is further dismayed that this decision, which will have a serious negative impact on the quality of life in the district, was made with no consultation with CB2 or local elected officials;
3. Requests a review of this policy change with CB2, local elected officials, and affected neighbors;
4. Opposes the installation of a new fence until consultation with all concerned is completed.

**VOTE: Unanimous, with 38 Board Members in favor.**

Please advise us of any decision or action taken in response to this resolution.

Sincerely,



David Gruber, Chair  
Community Board #2, Manhattan



Richard Caccappolo, Chair  
Parks, Recreation & Open Space Committee  
Community Board #2, Manhattan

DG/EM

- c:
- Hon. Nydia Velasquez, Congresswoman
  - Hon. Brad Hoylman, NY State Senator
  - Hon. Deborah Glick, Assembly Speaker
  - Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
  - Hon. Rosie Mendez, Council Member