



The Sunnyside Gardens Preservation Alliance

*Dedicated to the preservation, history & vitality of the
Sunnyside Gardens National Register Historic District*

August 25, 2016

Hon. Mitchell J. Silver, FAICP
Commissioner, New York City Department of Parks & Recreation
830 Fifth Ave
New York, NY 10065

Re: New park at 39th Ave. & 50th St., Woodside - Sunnyside Gardens Historic District

Dear Commissioner Silver,

We and our neighbors throughout Woodside and Sunnyside are excited and grateful to hear from the office of Council Majority Leader Jimmy Van Bramer that you share our interest and commitment and are moving expeditiously to bring us a new park, using the capital funding our Councilman has provided through the City Council.

The acquisition of the 10,000 square-foot corner lot at 50-02 39th Avenue (tax block 129, lot 30) is both practical and far-sighted. It will help relieve the lack of public green space in District 26, where [New Yorkers for Parks](#) documents our mere 2% of park acreage that ranks us 43rd among the 51 Council districts. Moreover, much of our existing parkland lies at the shore of the East River, the westernmost edge of the district

Former Commissioner Adrian Benepe is among the experts who have encouraged us by extolling the desirability and feasibility of this acquisition, and our elected officials have been fulsome advocates for this park.

We believe that, as a professional planner, you will appreciate the special resonance of a park at this corner within the Sunnyside Gardens Historic District. The land was purchased by the City Housing Corporation in 1924 when Clarence Stein and his colleagues began to develop Sunnyside Gardens. Completing the planned community in 1928, City Housing sold the property for the construction of Phipps Garden Apartments, where Clarence Stein continued to be the chief architect. As Cornell University Press is set to publish Kristin Larsen's book on Stein's legacy, this is a propitious time to make this historic corner of this private garden community into a public park.

Since 2009, we have sought a way to save this parkland and enable the broadest public to enjoy

it. With your department offering the solution, we look forward to being in touch with Queens Parks when the time comes to think about design and use.

With all our thanks,



Herbert Reynolds, President
Sunnyside Gardens Preservation Alliance
for our [Friends of the Park](#)

CC:

Liam Kavanagh, First Deputy Commissioner
Therese Braddick, Deputy Commissioner, Capital Projects
Laura Prussin, Chief of Staff to the Deputy Commissioner of Capital Projects
Diane Jackier, Chief of Capital Strategic Initiatives
Dorothy Lewandowski, Borough Commissioner
Joanne Amagrande, Chief of Staff to the Queens Borough Commissioner
Meenakshi Srinivasan, Chair, Landmarks Preservation Commission
Public Advocate Letitia James
Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito
Council Majority Leader Jimmy Van Bramer
Councilman Mark Levine
Nick Gulotta, Queens Borough Director for the Mayor's Community Affairs Unit
Assemblywoman Margaret Markey
Senator Michael Gianaris
Congressman Joseph Crowley
Borough President Melinda Katz
Queens Community Board 2
Harrison Place Homeowners
Phipps Tenant Association
50th-52nd Street Homeowners
Amy Paul, Woodside on the Move
Rev. Neil Margetson, Sunnyside Reformed Church
Adrian Benepe, Andy Stone, Trust for Public Land
Meg Fellerath, Demetrice Mills, Irene Van Slyke, Brooklyn Queens Land Trust
Christabel Gough, Michael Gotkin, Society for the Architecture of the City
Thaïsa Way, University of Washington
Kristin Larsen, University of Florida
Achva Stein, FAIA
Clarence Stein Institute, Cornell University
Simeon Bankoff, Historic Distracts Council
Peg Breen, New York Landmarks Conservancy
Charles Birnbaum, The Cultural Landscape Foundation
New Yorkers for Parks