



**Comments regarding the Draft Scope of Work
for a Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the NYU Core
May 24, 2011**

New Yorkers for Parks is the leading independent organization championing greener, cleaner and safer parks for all New Yorkers. We provide the tools that help communities build better parks for better neighborhoods citywide. New Yorkers for Parks (NY4P) achieves its mission through an integrated framework of research, advocacy, and strategic partnerships.

ALIENATION

The proposed development scenario for NYU's core expansion includes the alienation of a City park for disposition to a private developer. This park, Mercer Playground (or LMNOP), is a small public playground that has served the central Village community for 16 years. The playground itself is a result of years of community galvanizing and hard work to bring a public park to this underserved neighborhood.

The impact of this alienation should be thoroughly examined in the Environmental Impact Statement. While we applaud NYU for recognizing the need to replace Mercer Playground in their most recent expansion plan, the scenario is an alienation and, as such, must follow the procedural framework established for alienations of parkland in New York City. In order to comply with SEQRA, a full environmental review must be conducted prior to the New York City Council's passage of a home rule resolution to request alienation authority from the State Legislature. In 2007, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation affirmed this obligation. A copy of the DEC's affirmation is appended to this document.

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PARK PRESERVATION & MAINTENANCE

NYU's current expansion plan includes four acres of new or replacement open space. However, these new spaces will be owned and maintained by NYU, a private entity with no obligation to the public. We encourage the City to use the Environmental Review period, and specifically the Environmental Impact Statement to explore mechanisms that will oblige NYU to a) preserve these open spaces as open space in perpetuity, and b) contribute a set dollar amount to a dedicated maintenance fund that will be independently monitored to ensure the ongoing maintenance of the privately operated public open spaces.

We hope that NYU and the City will continue to work with us to address these concerns about Mercer Playground and establish a model for a maintenance fund. We look forward to seeing these issues fully explored in the Environmental Impact Statement.

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