



NYC Parks

Alyssa Cobb Konon
Assistant Commissioner
Planning and Development

T 212.360.3402

E alyssa.cobb@parks.nyc.gov

City of New York
Parks & Recreation

The Arsenal
Central Park
New York, NY 10065
www.nyc.gov/parks

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Senator Velmanette Montgomery
Room 903
Legislative Office Building
Albany, NY 12247

Dear Senator Montgomery,

Commissioner Silver has asked us to respond to your recent letter regarding the Parks Without Borders project at Fort Greene Park. Parks Without Borders is a new design approach focused on creating more open, welcoming, and beautiful public spaces where parks and neighborhoods meet, and Mayor De Blasio allocated \$50 million to realize it.

We launched the program in November 2015 with more than three months of community outreach to encourage New Yorkers to nominate parks. Anyone could nominate their park online through the Parks website. We also held 37 in-person events across the city, as we know not everyone has the same level of comfort or access to online engagement. Those events included a Brooklyn Borough Forum, to which community groups, stakeholders, and representatives of all Brooklyn Community Boards were invited, and a presentation to the Brooklyn Community Board 2's Parks Committee.

We received more than 6,100 nominations across the city, and Fort Greene Park was ultimately the second most nominated park in Brooklyn. Based on the community support and the historical lack of and need for investment in the park's northern edge, we selected it for inclusion in the Parks Without Borders program.

We continue to engage the community through the design process. In November 2016, we held a community input meeting at the park's Visitor Center attended by over 50 residents to kick off design and hear community members' priorities. Typically, we hold one community meeting for a capital project, but for Fort Greene we held two additional meetings at the Ingersoll Community Center. In February, we provided an update on the project at a meeting attended by over 100 local residents and, in May, at the request of the community, we held a third listening session. Through these meetings, we have been able to engage with hundreds of Fort Greene residents, including Walt Whitman and Ingersoll tenants.

We wholeheartedly understand the importance of this park to its residents, particularly those who live directly across the street, and our proposed design for the northern edge of Fort Greene Park incorporates the feedback we heard throughout this process. This project will not take away any open space, it will improve the functionality of the park's northern edge for existing uses. It will create more space for community gatherings, reconstruct the basketball court, fitness equipment, and barbecue areas, upgrade the lighting and sidewalks, and create ADA-accessible entrances.



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We understand residents are concerned that park construction will temporarily impact their access to the park. Our intention is to phase construction to the Myrtle Avenue side of the park in such a way that patrons will still have access throughout the construction phase.

We thank you for reaching out, and are willing to meet and discuss further.

Regards,

Nicholas Molinari
Chief of Planning and Neighborhood Development

cc: Assemblyman Walter Mosley
Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams
Councilmember Laurie Cumbo
Fort Greene Park Conservancy