



www.msba.info

Contact:

Justin Loeber, 212-260-7576

Justin.Loeber@MouthPublicRelations.com

Community Block Association Demands that New York University Halt Plans to Enlarge the School's Underground Power Plant And Agree to Renovate the System on their Own Property

University Will Remove More Than Twenty Trees from a Public Park Forced Traffic Patterns will Create Havoc for All the Residents on Mercer and Broadway

(Tuesday, April 3, 2007) FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE—New York University (NYU) plans to replace their 30 year-old power plant located under 251 Mercer Street, (the southwest corner of Mercer and West 4th). This plan includes the unfortunate and unnecessary consequence of uprooting more than 20 trees soaring higher than five stories, many of which are not even living on NYU property. The project could potentially cut off two out of three car lanes located in front of 250 Mercer Street—a city block-wide coop building consisting of 277 apartments as well as many businesses located in the Historical Noho District—wreaking havoc on the block.

According to a March 28, 2007 press release distributed by the university, Dr. Alicia D. Hurley, NYU Associate Vice President for Government and Community Affairs, states, "We were extremely pleased that we were able to work with the community to come to a decision on this."

The press release ignores the fact that NYU is pressuring the Mercer Square Owners Corporation (MSOC), the Coop Board of the 250 Mercer Street, to speed up the negotiations with the school and agree to a cash deal while disregarding the pleadings of the neighborhood's advocacy group, known as the Mercer Square Block Association (MSBA), who have been working tirelessly with NYU, community organizations, and public officials for more than four months to come up with a practical alternative to the pending issue.

Josh Neuman, a member of the Block Association says, "If you want to build a pool on your property, why dig the ditch in the neighbor's backyard? Most of the space where NYU plans to build is owned by the Department of Transportation (DOT) and managed by the Parks Department. These trees have been enjoyed by neighbors and the community at large for more than 40 years. In light of the scarcity of mature trees of this size in lower Manhattan, NYU has no business removing a precious community resource when there are less environmentally damaging alternatives on NYU's own property." Neuman adds, "In fact, the university's own alternative option, which divide construction

between nearby Gould Plaza—a totally man-made square—and NYU property on Mercer Street, would spare two thirds of the trees.”

NYU’s campus is part of an historic district surrounding Washington Square Park. Elaine Hudson, who founded the Mercer Square Block Association nearly twenty years ago, also reminds us that, “Sadly, if you walk around the corner and down West 3rd Street, behind some of the major buildings NYU owns, there is not one tree on the north side of the block. Our beautiful area is one of a small handful in a neighborhood that used to be a charming historical Greenwich Village, and now the place has morphed into a concrete jungle. Is Washington Square Park the next sanctuary to be chopped up and cut down?”

Kyle Ericksen, a fellow Block Association member who has resided at 250 Mercer since 1980, comments, “With NYU’s plan we will have none of the environmental benefits yet all of the inconveniences that having a construction site across the street from our building will bring. Removing these majestic trees—the very breadth of the area—desecrates nature at a time when we should honor and uphold it. If other block associations think the demolition of this city-owned haven isn’t an issue for them, what will happen to Washington Square or the other mini parks that surround Mercer Street in the future?”

To add more congestion—both to the story and to the neighborhood—NYU’s renovation coincides with another street project that will greatly affect *all* dwellers on Mercer Street, especially if the university follows their announced plans. The Block Association recently discovered that the DOT will be shutting down lanes on the southern section of Broadway, forcing a very complicated traffic pattern in the back of 250 Mercer Street. Hudson wonders, “If NYU shuts down the street to the front of 250 Mercer and the DOT zigzags traffic to the back, what will happen if there’s an emergency evacuation? Did NYU look at all the neighborhood street plans before deciding that the one they’ve touted is the best option?”

The Block Association makes their plea to Dr. Hurley, proclaiming, “We all can live with a fair share of construction—and that is not the issue because we are in favor of NYU upgrading their power plant to the highest of environmental standards. However, if NYU rips up a public park, they are ripping up history. Is that a decision NYU wants to be known for and one that *they can live with?*”

To learn more about the issue and to sign a petition against the ruination of the public park, click onto www.msba.info. To interview members of the advocacy group, contact Justin Loeber at Mouth Public Relations; Justin.Loeber@MouthPublicRelations.com.

#

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: This release is intended only for the person or entity to which it is addressed. If you have received it in error, please notify the sender immediately and delete the original. Any future distribution or reproduction of this release is prohibited unless the specific written consent of Mouth Public Relations, LLC has first been obtained. For more information on Mouth Public Relations or to get in contact with us, please visit www.MouthPublicRelations.com.