



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD 3

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Alysha Lewis-Coleman, Board Chair

Susan Stetzer, District Manager

William T. Castro, Manhattan Borough Commissioner
New York City Department of Parks & Recreation
Arsenal West
24 West 61st Street, 5th Floor
New York, NY 10023

Dear Commissioner Castro,

At its February 2019 monthly meeting, Community Board 3 passed the following resolution:

TITLE: To Support the Proposed LES Community Tree Canopy Initiative and Urge the Department of Parks and Recreation to Work with Community Organizations to Spearhead the Program

Whereas, Community Board 3 has many empty tree pits and a general lack of healthy trees and green space which impacts the air quality, heat island effect and the livability of the community; and

Whereas, local residents suffer from asthma and other illnesses due in part to particulates and other pollutants from vehicles, buildings, power plants; and

Whereas, there is a pending City plan for the multi-year closing of the East River Park, CB3's largest park; and

Whereas, NASA recently confirmed that global climate change has resulted in the last five years being the hottest years since record keeping began; and

Whereas, there is general acknowledgment that one of the best ways to combat urban climate change impacts is with street trees that mitigate temperature extremes, energy usage and vehicle-generated carbon emissions; and

Whereas, there are few other investments that return so much of value to society than street trees; and

Whereas, the Department of Parks and Recreation to work in collaboration with civic and community stewards, to plant hundreds of trees and smaller native shrubs and plants that will create a green canopy that strengthens resilience and capacity, sequesters storm water and carbon while pumping out oxygen and cooler air; and

Whereas, we encourage the Department of Parks and Recreation, by selecting trees that are less likely to induce severe allergies to the substantial portion of the population, and are resilient and adaptable to changing harsh climate conditions and by selecting trees that also support insects that pollinate plant life, that are food indigenous to birds and help decompose plant detritus; and

Whereas, reworked tree pits would include enriching infertile areas, tree pit guards to protect new trees and bioswales for increased storm water reclamation and rain absorption; and

Whereas, given the lessons learned with "million trees" plantings, the Department of Parks and Recreation could build into contractor agreements legally binding maintenance requirements to water and care for the trees for a full two-year period;

Therefore be it resolved, that CB3 supports the concept of the LES Community Canopy and urges the Department of Parks and Recreation to spearhead the immediate engagement with the network of stewardship organizations and proponents, to survey existing trees and tree pits and widening other spaces where an expanded variety of species can be planted, and implement an accelerated planting and caring program for street trees throughout CB3, prioritizing the most tree canopy deficient areas and developing an inclusive, engaged process for involving residents, experts and staff.

Please contact the community board office with any questions.

Sincerely,



Alysha Lewis-Coleman, Chair
Community Board 3



Trever Holland, Chair
Parks, Recreations, Waterfront,
& Resiliency Committee

cc: Steve Simon, Department of Parks and Recreation
Elizabeth Martinez, Department of Parks and Recreation
Office of Councilmember Carlina Rivera
Office of Councilmember Margaret Chin
Office of Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer
Office of NYS Assemblymember Yuh-Line Niou
Office of NYS Assemblymember Harvey Epstein
Office of NYS Assemblymember Deborah Glick
Office of NYS Senator Brian Kavanagh
Office of NYS Senator Brad Hoylman
Wendy Brawer, Green Map System