



Hon. Bill de Blasio  
Mayor  
City of New York  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

May 9, 2014

Dear Mayor de Blasio:

We are writing to you as the elected officials representing Manhattan's Damrosch Park, which is a public park located at Amsterdam Avenue and West 62<sup>nd</sup> Street, and the neighborhood residents who depend upon that open space.

We are deeply concerned about the situation regarding Damrosch Park. In recent years, the open space of Damrosch Park has become far less accessible to the community than anyone would like.

For the last several decades, New York City has maintained an agreement with Lincoln Center in which Lincoln Center is granted the rights to manage, maintain and operate Damrosch Park, together with Josie Robertson Plaza and the parking garage beneath those public spaces; to grant concessions and hold special events in those spaces; and to retain the revenues from those events and concessions. While this agreement is long-standing, in recent years, the operation of the concessions and special events within Damrosch Park has seriously curtailed access to the park for neighborhood residents. Since 2010, Damrosch Park has been the site of New York Fashion Week, which takes over the park for several months of the year, not only during the event but also during the weeks-long set up and breakdown. Additionally, since the arrival of Fashion Week in 2010, several of the other private events and concessions held throughout the year have expanded their footprints within Damrosch Park, preventing full enjoyment of the park. In short, our constituents feel that Damrosch Park has become largely inaccessible to them and the general public. This has caused great upset throughout the neighborhood surrounding the park, which includes the entire Lincoln Square neighborhood and NYCHA's Amsterdam Houses.

Because of these rising concerns, a group of neighbors and park advocates recently brought a lawsuit against Lincoln Center and the City of New York, which alleges that the City's agreement with Lincoln Center for use of the park and the scope of the events held in the park over the last several years are tantamount to parkland alienation. The lawsuit also alleges that the City's assignment of the revenues from the use of the park and the parking garages below the park to Lincoln Center violates the City Charter. If that is the case, we are also deeply concerned that the revenues be correctly assigned.

We support and value Lincoln Center as a major cultural institution in our districts and New York City, and certainly respect the community and arts programming that Lincoln Center brings to the neighborhood. However, Damrosch Park, as mapped parkland, must be the true

community resource it is intended to be. We must be certain that private events, such as New York Fashion Week, are not excluding normal park use in Damrosch Park, and we must also be certain that the revenues generated from uses of the park are distributed in accordance with the City Charter.

To discuss the issues regarding Damrosch Park, including the location of Fashion Week within the Park and the long-term accessibility of the park, we are requesting a meeting with the appropriate people in your administration at your earliest convenience to discuss these issues and concerns.

Sincerely,



Congressman Jerrold Nadler



NYS Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal



NYS Senator Brad Hoylman



Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer



NYC Councilmember Helen Rosenthal

cc: Commissioner Mitchell J. Silver, NYC Department of Parks and Recreation