



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
**OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT**  
BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN

**C. VIRGINIA FIELDS**  
BOROUGH PRESIDENT  
July 15, 2005

Adrian Benepe  
Commissioner  
Department of Parks and Recreation  
The Arsenal, Central Park  
New York, NY 10021

Dear Commissioner Benepe:

I am writing to request a meeting with you to discuss the restoration plan of Union Square Park including the proposed privatization and commercialization of the North Plaza of Union Square Park.


Currently, as you may know, there is limited public and park space available within Community Board 5 district. Efforts to maintain public green space are a priority for this community and should also be for the Department of Parks and Recreation. Union Square Park and the North Plaza of Union Square is highly valued property that serves many constituencies, including local residents, park visitors and most important, the children. The Union Square community should not be asked to trade away the little public space it has.

Improving the public facilities already in place should be given priority. However, it has come to my attention that the recent proposed re-design of Union Square Park would expand the pavilion, located in the North Plaza, to a private venue that would limit usage to the public. I am opposed to having an exclusive privately owned restaurant that would impinge on the already limited, open free space of Union Square. The pavilion should be restored and returned to its original intent as, public space. I wholeheartedly endorse the community's recommendation that this space include a cultural component, accessible to the public.

I strongly agree with Community Board 5's call for an enlarged children's playground area, adequate park security, maintaining the Greenmarket during any construction phase; and I would also request that Community Board 5 and local elected officials have an opportunity to review the draft RFP prior to its release.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter. My office will be in contact with your office to schedule the appointment.

Very truly yours,

  
C. Virginia Fields  
Manhattan Borough President

Cc: Councilmember Margarita Lopez  
Community Board 5  
Jack Taylor-Union Square Community Coalition  
Stanley Bulbach, Ph.D-West Fifteenth Street-200 Block Association