

June 19, 2017

Dear Councilmember Garodnick

Although I write to you as a private citizen, my support of Greenacre Park -- and for protecting the natural light that is essential to its health -- is informed by my past experience as the co-founder of Friends of the High Line, and my current perspective as the President and CEO of World Monuments Fund. For the last 20 years, I have devoted my life to creating and stewarding great public places in New York and around the world. Since I am unable to attend the June 20 City Council hearing on the Midtown East Rezoning plan, I am submitting this testimony in writing so my opinion becomes a part of the written record.

I hope you will take all possible positive actions at this final stage of the rezoning process to help protect the future of Greenacre Park.

I applaud your efforts to date to ensure that the current rezoning plan does not adversely affect the park by significantly reducing the amount of sunlight reaching it.

Developed in 1971 for public use, Greenacre Park is maintained with private funds through the generosity of Greenacre Foundation (in addition to my affiliations with the High Line and World Monuments Fund, I'm also a board member of the Greenacre Foundation). The park attracts 200,000 visitors annually, including residents, families, tourists, and members of the local workforce.

The proposed rezoning threatens to eliminate virtually all afternoon sun from the park, which would significantly impact its ability to serve workers, residents, and visitors in an appealing and healthful way.

The park is the only green space of its kind in the rezoning study area. Only two percent of the acreage in Council District 4 is dedicated to parkland, versus a citywide average of 19 percent.

Councilmember Garodnick, Greenacre Park is a very special jewel in New York City's public realm. I hope you will do everything within your power to keep light shining down on the trees and plants that delight working New Yorkers who use it every day as their midday retreat, and the many residents and visitors who find solace in the refuge that it offers.

A modified rezoning plan would improve midtown Manhattan while also preserving Greenacre Park's scarce sunlight. I urge you to support a modified rezoning plan that would maintain the character and appeal of this popular and essential open space.

With thanks for your consideration,

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