

STOP THE PLASTIC PARK

www.stoptheplasticpark.org

Date: February 21, 2021

To: Governor Andrew M. Cuomo
Commissioner Erik Kulleseid

Subject: The Redesign and Construction of Marsha P. Johnson State Park

Dear Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and
New York State Parks Commissioner Erik Kulleseid,

We the signatories call for an immediate HALT to construction in the Marsha P. Johnson State Park in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, and insist that the park redesign be opened to input from North Brooklyn residents and LGBTQ+ communities.

While we celebrate the naming of the park to honor Marsha P. Johnson, the redesign calls for more than an acre of plastic-coated concrete, asphalt replacing the soft paths, and eight-foot-diameter foam core flower disks blocking views of the river. Rather than using harsh thermoplastic colors, huge cement slabs and artificial flowers, the spirit of Marsha P. Johnson should be celebrated with natural flowers and green space. Marsha P. Johnson was known to spend her last dollar to buy flowers to lift her spirits. With real flowers and other natural elements, we can bring the peace and beauty Marsha P. Johnson craved to heal and support all who use this historic and beloved park.

The impacts of climate change, storm surge, sea level rise and our combined sewage system must be addressed in any design along the North Brooklyn waterfront. Millions spent on infrastructure to mitigate runoff is not the answer. Non-permeable plastic and asphalt surfaces violate the principles of best environmental practices and alter the historic nature of this waterfront park, which the North Brooklyn community fought so hard to create.

The North Brooklyn community was given just two days advance presentation of the design and notice of park closure. And according to the Governor's press release at the time of the renaming of the park, "State Parks will consult with the New York City LGBTQ community on design and content." That promise appears to refer exclusively to interpretive materials, not the overall design, and refers to the future. The park's design to our regret appeared to be de facto, not subject to any community engagement process.

We are calling on the Governor and NYS Parks to halt construction immediately and reimagine this park design with robust input from the LGBTQ+ and North Brooklyn communities.

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This design must offer the essential experience of nature we seek from our parks, preserve the historic fabric of this unique site, address climate change and environmental factors, and truly celebrate the beauty and spirit of Marsha P. Johnson.

To honor activist Marsha P. Johnson, allow these communities to help create the best possible redesign for this large tax-payer-supported park renovation.

Signed,

Stop the Plastic Park

American Indian Community House

BARC Bklyn Animal Resources Coalition

Community Education Council District 14

Friends of Box Street Park

Friends of Bushwick Inlet Park

Friends of Cooper Park

Friends of East River State Park

Friends of Transmitter Park

Kingsland Wildflowers

Los Sures Southside United HDFC

Make: STEAM

McGolrick Park Neighborhood Alliance

Milton Street Block Association

Newtown Creek Alliance

North Brooklyn Neighbors

North Brooklyn Open Space Stewards

Prevention Access Campaign

St. Nick's Alliance

Sustainable Williamsburg

The Well Project

Town Square BK

UNO United Neighbors Organization

...updates to come

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