



### MERCER STREET LANDSCAPING PROJECT

- Creation of a green space and garden along Mercer Street open to all
- Design guided by a committee of local stake holders
- A street-level green space that one can walk through or linger in

New York University is pleased to present its proposal for the redesigned open space on Mercer Street between West 3<sup>rd</sup> and West 4<sup>th</sup> Streets. This site was excavated to facilitate the underground installation of a new energy-efficient, emissions-reducing [CoGeneration facility](#) currently under construction. At that time New York University committed to working with the community to develop an improved open space to replace the preexisting one.

This proposal is the result of a community-engaged process to create a space that takes the concerns of all users into consideration. We are grateful to all those who participated in creating the design, including representatives of the Washington Square Village Tenants Association, Community Board Two, 250 Mercer Street, New York University, local businesses and our elected officials.

The new space will be built and maintained by New York University and remain under the City's jurisdiction.

#### QUICK FACTS

<b>Location:</b>	251 Mercer Street between West 4 <sup>th</sup> and West 3 <sup>rd</sup> Streets
<b>Architects:</b>	Mathews Nielsen Landscape Architects P.C. <a href="http://www.mnlandscape.com/">http://www.mnlandscape.com/</a>
<b>Schedule:</b>	As part of New York University's Co-Generation project, the Mercer Street Garden will be constructed once the underground work is completed. The open space is scheduled to be completed by late Spring/early Summer 2010.
<b>Access:</b>	The new space will be open and accessible to the public.
<b>Planning:</b>	A Community Advisory Committee consisting of various stakeholders, residents and community members was established to guide the design process. This committee was charged with selecting the landscape architect and guiding the design process. The CAC voted unanimously in favor of the final proposal in May.
<b>Approvals:</b>	The proposal will be reviewed at a public meeting of Community Board Two and subsequently the Public Design Commission for final approval. NYU has been consulting with the NYC Department of Transportation, Department of Parks and Recreation and Department of City Planning.
<b>Maintenance:</b>	The area will be maintained by New York University with oversight by NYC Department of Parks and Recreation and the Department of Transportation.
<b>Site Details:</b>	The at grade open space will be 8,000 sq ft (including sidewalk area) dedicated for seasonal planting, trees and seating.

*COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE*

NYU convened a 15 member Community Advisory Committee (CAC) comprised of neighbors, Community Board members, a local business, elected officials, and an NYU student and professor. The group met five times to assist in the planning and design of the new garden that will be constructed above the University's new co-generation plant.

The process began with the CAC discussing general principles and goals for the green space, reviewing architects and unanimously selecting Mathews Nielsen Landscape Architects (MNLA) to lead the project. Mathews Nielsen then met with the group to present the logistical limitations and opportunities for the space and listen to ideas.

The CAC overwhelmingly urged MNLA to incorporate as many trees into the garden as possible. To achieve this, available soil depth and volume was analyzed, tree placement was determined and then a design concept was developed.

This community-engaged process with the landscape team has resulted in a new green space that integrates the interests and concerns of as many stakeholders as possible.

This proposal is scheduled to appear before the July Parks Committee meeting for additional community input and review. The Public Design Commission will review for final approval in October. (Dates subject to change.)

*PRIOR CONDITION*



Prior to construction of the co-generation facility, the site contained two parallel sidewalks and two fenced/gated areas with trees, shrubbery, and some ground cover. There was as no seating at street level.

## THE PROPOSAL

The proposal seeks to create a lush green oasis that invites people not only to walk through but to stop in and sit among plantings and trees. The proposal features three “rooms” for seating that allow for quiet reflection or conversation. Inclined plant beds will display seasonal and indigenous plant life. Additionally there will be 22 deciduous and ornamental trees on the site. The lighting has been designed to allow for ample security but not to disturb neighboring buildings at night.

The selection of materials will stress a natural feeling. Paving and decking has been chosen to deter skateboarders while remaining fully ADA compliant. Additionally, seating has been designed to discourage overnight visitors.

An ADA ramp on the southern end leads to a second level open space and the entrance of Warren Weaver Hall, the home of the Courant Institute of Mathematical Sciences. The raised plaza also contains planters as well as movable seating and chairs.



*Planking is used to delineate three rooms with seating, benches and plant beds.*



*View south on Mercer Street towards West 3<sup>rd</sup> Street*



*View north on Mercer Street towards West 4<sup>th</sup> Street*

*PLANNING PRINCIPLES*

This proposal is consistent with the planning principles developed by the Community Task Force on NYU Development.

- The proposed open space re-envisioned recreational space that will better serve both the University and the community.
- The site uses a thoughtful landscape design to improve the existing open space.
- Input from the community was actively solicited, utilized, and implemented throughout the design process.

*PROJECTED SCHEDULE FOR APPROVALS AND CONSTRUCTION (MAY CHANGE)*

July 2009	Community Board Two Parks Committee
July 2009	Community Board Two Full Board
October 2009	Final review by Public Design Commission

The construction is scheduled to be completed in Late Spring/Early Summer 2010.

Questions regarding this project may be directed to NYU's Office of Government and Community Affairs, 212-998-2400, [community.affairs@nyu.edu](mailto:community.affairs@nyu.edu).