

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

From: Community United to Protect Theodore Roosevelt Park  
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**Community United Demands Final Environmental Impact Study from  
Department of Parks for Proposed AMNH Expansion**

New York, NY—Community United to Protect Theodore Roosevelt Park (CU) has written an open letter to Owen Wells, the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation's Director of Environmental Review, questioning the delay in the release of a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the proposed Richard Gilder Center expansion to the American Museum of Natural History.

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), prepared for the AMNH by the firm AKRF, was released to the public on May 18<sup>th</sup>. At that time, Community United retained one of the world's most trusted global environmental consulting firms, GHD, to analyze the DEIS. The GHD analysis, dated June 15<sup>th</sup>, reported that AKRF failed to address 5 of the 19 technical areas identified in the City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Manual, and that the Museum's responses to some of the environmental impact questions were insufficient and incomplete.

GHD urged that these questions, especially those relating to the disturbance of highly toxic substances (i.e. asbestos, lead, beryllium, chromium, mercury, PAHs, industrial solvents and arsenic, which were found in both soil and ground water samples), and those relating to the effect of increased traffic on an already strained infrastructure and transportation system, needed to be answered completely and satisfactorily prior to the completion of the FEIS.

It has been over 150 days since the release of the DEIS last spring and neither the FEIS nor a Remediation Action Plan for addressing these concerns have been released. In fact, the only action the American Museum of Natural History has taken is to file for city approvals of building permits. It did this on August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

Filing for building permits prior to the completion of required community review has increased concerns that the Museum is not committed to transparency, and contributes to fears that necessary information is being withheld from the public.

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In their open letter to Director Wells, Community United Co-Presidents Claudia Di Salvo and Laura Messersmith write that the Upper West Side community deserves a clear and comprehensive plan on how public health and traffic dangers will be addressed, and demands that the FEIS and accompanying Remediation Action Plan be released before the upcoming elections on November 7<sup>th</sup>.

Copied on the letter to Mr. Wells were: Governor Andrew Cuomo, U.S. Senator Charles Schumer, U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, Mayor Bill DeBlasio, Deputy Mayor Alicia Glen, NYC Public Advocate Letitia James, U.S. Representative Jerrold Nadler, NYS Senator Jose M. Serrano, NYS Assembly Member Linda Rosenthal, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, NYC Parks Commissioner Mitchell Silver, NYC Council Member Helen Rosenthal. To date, there have been no replies to Community United to Protect Theodore Roosevelt Park.

Community United is an organization of Upper West Side residents devoted to saving Theodore Roosevelt Park in its entirety, preventing potential environmental disaster, and standing up to the greed of private development on public land.

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Editor's Note: For further information about Community United to Protect Theodore Roosevelt Park, contact Co-President Laura Messersmith, Telephone: (617) 335-5210, Email: [LJQMessersmith@gmail.com](mailto:LJQMessersmith@gmail.com), website: [www.saveourpark.nyc](http://www.saveourpark.nyc)

The Community United executive board welcomes one-on-one press availabilities with interested members of the media.

### *Attachments include:*

- PDF Press Release
- Community United to Protect Theodore Roosevelt Park letter to Owen Wells, Director of Environmental Review, New York City Department of Parks and Recreation
- GHD Analysis of Draft Environmental Impact Statement