



Dear Friend,

Thank you for reaching out about your concerns for Washington Square Park. We know that problematic and illegal uses at the Park and your quality of experience at Washington Square has deteriorated.

The Washington Square Park Conservancy does not have a management or enforcement role, however, we have and are taking steps to address these issues. WSPC has deployed public programs throughout the Park to bring targeted positive activity into spaces suffering from misuse. We have purchased additional signage to inform Park-goers about rules around wheeled devices. We have increased our volunteer activities so there are additional hands keeping things clean. We supported an NYC Parks-led initiative to upgrade the lighting to brighter LEDs and are advocating for increased social services. We are in regular communication with the NYPD and NYC Parks about the conditions we are witnessing on the ground as well as reports from concerned community members like you. Finally, we have undertaken research to determine more long-term strategies surrounding Park safety and Quality of Experience. But our efforts alone aren't enough, and to get Washington Square Park the help it needs, support from the broader community (YOU) is essential.

Below, we've outlined some ways you can help us make an impact depending on the issue or issues concerning you most. We've broken it down by some of the most commonly voiced concerns about the Park, with resources to further educate yourself about the problem and suggested actions you can take. Also included is a list of contacts for important stakeholders. If you do take action, please let us know about the experience and any recommendations you have for other community members looking to get involved. We can't resolve these problems overnight, but with consistent pressure on the right stakeholders we hope a significant impact can be made.

Thank you for your help, and if you'd like to discuss any of these problems - or how the Conservancy is working to address them, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Best,
Sheryl Woodruff
WSPC Deputy Director

PARK RULES AND WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ENFORCEMENT

- There are many rules for Washington Square Park. Sometimes it is obvious that an activity is out of bounds, other times it might not be so clear. You can review prohibited and regulated usage outlined by [NYC Parks here](#).
- The Conservancy does not operate the Park. All rules/regulation enforcement is handled by NYC Parks Enforcement Patrol (also known as PEP). Illegal activities are the responsibility of the NYPD. The closure of the Park each night at midnight is the responsibility of the 6th Precinct of the NYPD.

SMOKING

- You can review [NYC's Smoke-Free Air Act here](#). Smoking and vaping are not permitted in any NYC Park, beach, pedestrian plaza, golf course, stadium, etc.
 - Unfortunately the new law legalizing the consumption of cannabis has accelerated incidents of smoking both nicotine and marijuana in Washington Square Park and across all NYC Parks.
- Reach out to NYC Parks/Parks Enforcement Patrol to express your concerns. Calling and emailing are both recommended. Be explicit about your concerns and how the behavior is interfering with your ability to use the park.

VENDING/EXPRESSIVE MATTER/BUSKING

- Review the [NYC Parks rules](#) on expressive matter and vending in parks and familiarize yourself with vending/performing regulations. A few highlights:
 - Products sold must be 100% hand-made, and displayed appropriately on a table to not interfere with the flow of traffic.
 - Items for sale may not be affixed to or displayed on any park infrastructure.
 - Performers must obtain a sound permit from the NYPD to utilize amplified sound, acoustic music does not require a permit.
 - Performers, live artists, etc, may not charge a fee for their shows, but can accept donations.
- Reach out to NYC Parks/Parks Enforcement Patrol to express your concerns. Calling and emailing are both recommended. Be explicit about your concerns and how the behavior is interfering with your ability to use the park.
- While cannabis has been legalized in the state, the sale of marijuana and associated paraphernalia is not permitted in any NYC park. Please report vendors to Parks Enforcement Patrol and the NYPD 6th Precinct. This can be done via email, phone-call, or submitting a 311 report.

WHEELED DEVICES (skateboards, bikes, etc)

- All of Washington Square Park's hardscapes are designated as pedestrian pathways, which means no wheeled devices such as bikes, skateboards, scooters, etc are permitted to be ridden on the pavements.
- Report instances of skateboarding to the 6th precinct via 311. While the report won't make a difference in the moment, 311 data is utilized when making enforcement decisions.

- Contact NYC Parks and the 6th precinct via phone or email to express your concerns about wheeled devices. Be explicit about the safety risk these devices pose and provide specific examples.

ILLEGAL/ILLCIT ACTIVITY

- When you see illegal activity (violence, drug sale or usage, etc) in the Park please immediately call 911 or try to locate the nearest Parks Enforcement Patrol officer. We also suggest calling or emailing NYC Parks to inform them of your perspective of the incident.
- Unfortunately, the instances of illegal or illicit activity have continued to increase in the Park. Under former Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, a cohort of human service organizations were organized to perform regular outreach to the Park's at-risk population to try and connect them to resources. That is a long and slow process to try and address a systemic problem plaguing our entire city, and it needs a strong show of support for the efforts to continue. Please contact our new Borough President Mark Levine and encourage his office to continue to spearhead the effort, and contact your city and state representatives to ask for their support as well.

STAKEHOLDER CONTACTS

- Community Board 2: 212-979-2272
- NYC Parks:
 - Park Enforcement, Assistant Commissioner for Urban Park Service, Edwin Rodriguez - 212-360-2778/edwin.rodriguez@parks.nyc.gov
 - WSP Deputy Administrator, William Morrison - William.Morrison@parks.nyc.gov
- 6th Precinct Community Affairs Office:
 - 212-741-4826
 - Neighborhood Coordination Officers
 - DET Brian Garcia - BRIAN.GARCIA@nypd.org
 - PO Annalee Simon - ANNALEE.SIMON@nypd.org
- WSP's Council Member
 - Christopher Marte - 212-587-3159/district1@council.nyc.gov
- Your Council Member (look up your district [here](#)):
 - Christopher Marte - 212-587-3159/district1@council.nyc.gov
 - Erik Bottcher - 212-564-7757/ district3@council.nyc.gov
 - Carlina Rivera - 212-677-1077/district2@council.nyc.gov
- Manhattan Borough President
 - Mark Levine - 212-669-8300/info@manhattanbp.nyc.gov
- Your New York State Representative (look up your district [here](#)):
 - Assembly Member Deborah Glick - 212-674-5153/GlickD@nyassembly.gov
 - State Senator Brad Hoylman - 212-633-8052/hoylman@nysenate.gov
- Mayor's Community Affairs Unit:
 - Andrew Kunkes, Emergency Relief Coordinator - 212-346-6213/akunkes@cityhall.nyc.gov

OTHER WAYS TO HELP

- Share this document with your friends, neighbors, and networks.
- Your donation to the Conservancy supports core staffing and programming for Washington Square Park. [Donate Today](#).
 - Your contributions support 7 crew members that work to clean and beautify the hardscapes and landscapes of the Park.
 - Your support funds the tools, cleaning supplies, and planting materials to renew the Park (whether from general use or the vandalism that is on the rise.)
 - Your dollars support permitted events that disrupt illegal and improper usage.
 - Your contributions fund ongoing volunteer opportunities.
- Volunteer at an upcoming volunteer morning to lend a hand with Park clean-up and gardening. [Learn more here](#).
- Sometimes a public message is the strongest. Below are some suggestions for ways you can make your voice heard.
 - Tweet at 311 when you see safety issues such as skateboarding (@nyc311) or report issues via the 311 app. We've been told that the number of reports is a metric utilized when determining where to assign resources.
 - Tweet at NYC Parks when you see maintenance issues (@NYCParks) or to thank the NYC Parks staff who work so hard in WSP every day
 - Tweet at your local elected official
 - Share with your social media networks the efforts you're taking to help the Park and encourage them to join you.