

**Municipal Art Society  
Save Coney Island  
Coney Island Cyclone**

**Coney Island USA  
Coney Island History Project**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**GROUPS REJECT RECENTLY PROPOSED CHANGES  
TO CONEY REZONING, CALL FOR LAND SALE TO PROCEED**

*Say City of New York is the Only Entity  
That Can Create a Great Amusement Destination*

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**New York, NY, April 1, 2009** -- A coalition of community, arts and planning groups today stated that recent recommendations for changes to a proposed re-zoning plan for Coney Island will harm the district. The recommended changes have recently emerged from the ULURP process.

The groups, including Municipal Art Society, Coney Island USA, Save Coney Island, the Coney Island History Project and Coney Island Cyclone operator Carol Albert, singled out a proposal to expand the size of retail units to 10,000 square feet, which they said would transform the amusement area into a large-scale shopping district rather than one with local businesses and world class amusements.

The groups also stated that New York City is best positioned to develop a publicly owned amusement park, and urged Thor Equities to sell its land to the city for the good of Coney Island. The city has stated its intent to purchase Thor Equities' property.

"We believe that the economics do not currently allow for the creation of an amusement park on privately-owned land, and we strongly support the city's efforts to acquire private property in the amusement area," said MAS President Vin Cipolla. The MAS commissioned a six-week economic study by nationally-known real estate advisory firm RCLCO which concluded that an amusement area was only possible on publicly owned land.

"If the Council increases the size of the retail allowed in the amusement area, it will transform Coney Island into a shopping mall, and end its life as an amusement park," said Coney Island USA artistic director Dick Zigun. "Tourists and visitors are not going to visit Coney to shop at a national pharmacy outlet, or a dollar store. It would eliminate Coney Island's potential as a cultural and economic engine and as a true amenity for all New Yorkers."

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The groups also expressed their long-standing desire to see the city's zoning plan adjusted to expand the amount of land dedicated to outdoor amusements and to avoid creating a "wall" of high-rise buildings along the south side of Surf Avenue that would block the amusement district and the beach.

"We need to create an open and accessible amusement park of sufficient scale that will have the critical mass to pull tourists and visitors from all of New York and the world," said Save Coney Island representative Lola Staar. "The plan can be bigger and bolder."

The city's zoning plan is currently proceeding through the ULURP process. On Monday, the Brooklyn Borough President held a hearing on the issue, and the City Planning Commission is expected to begin its review of the plan on or about April 20.

*The Municipal Art Society of New York is a private, non-profit membership organization that fights for intelligent urban planning, design and preservation through education, dialogue and advocacy. The organization was founded in 1893. For more information, please visit [www.mas.org](http://www.mas.org)*

*Coney Island USA is a non-profit organization based in the amusement park area of the Coney Island neighborhood of Brooklyn New York. In existence since 1980, Coney Island USA has developed and produces a number of different programs including some of New York City's best loved summer programming, such as the Mermaid Parade and the Coney Island Circus Sideshow. Coney Island USA also operates the Coney Island Museum and produces Ask the Experts, Burlesque at the Beach, the Coney Island Tattoo and Motorcycle Festival, Creepshow at the Freakshow, and the Coney Island Sideshow School.*

*Save Coney Island is a grassroots community organization made up of concerned citizens, local business owners, artists, international planners, architects, academics: people from all walks of life and from all over the world, brought together by their love of Coney Island, 'The People's Playground.'*

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