

NYRP

New York Restoration Project

*New York City Council – Community Gardens Hearing
New York Restoration Project Testimony
September 24, 2007*

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Good morning, my name is Drew Becher. I am the Executive Director of the New York Restoration Project. Thank you for providing me the opportunity to speak today. NYRP is most grateful for the City Council's ongoing support of our work, and fully supports Council Member Foster's resolution to preserve Green Thumb Gardens and set aside additional land to be developed as community gardens.

As you may know, NYRP is a nonprofit organization founded by Bette Midler and dedicated to reclaiming, reforesting, and restoring parks, community gardens, and open space in impoverished neighborhoods throughout New York City. In 1999, we joined a consortium of foundations and concerned citizens and helped save 114 community gardens, which were threatened with sale by the City of New York to commercial developers. We then purchased 60 of the gardens most in need of clean-up and restoration, and created a land trust to ensure that they remained open space in perpetuity. To help stabilize these vital community resources, we are fully restoring each garden by bringing innovative design solutions to meet local needs. Over the past 8 years, we have fully restored a number of gardens, which have also been endowed to support their upkeep in perpetuity. We also provide ongoing support to local gardeners in the form of plant materials and educational and horticultural workshops.

Overwhelming evidence demonstrates the benefits of plentiful green open spaces like parks and gardens. They improve our physical and psychological health, strengthen our communities, and make our city and its neighborhoods more attractive places to live and work. NYRP's community gardens act as "village greens" by providing a public green space for relaxation, recreation, and community gatherings in neighborhoods where concrete is the norm. Our gardens are a sub-park system that help ensure that everyone—especially those living in impoverished and densely populated urban areas—has access to nature and to vibrant and well-designed open spaces.

We look forward to continuing our partnership with the City Council on future greening initiatives and thank you for your attention.



City of New York Parks & Recreation



Hearing before the City Council Committee on Parks

Oversight – Community Gardens and Operation of Green Thumb

September 24, 2007

Testimony by
Assistant Commissioner Jack T. Linn

BACKGROUND

Parks & Recreation is the steward of almost 29,000 acres of land--14 percent of New York City--including more than 4,000 individual properties ranging from Pelham Bay Park in the Bronx, our largest park, to the smallest, McCarthy Square in the West Village.

An important part of our work over the past 12 years has been the GreenThumb Community Gardeners program, with 6,426 GreenThumb Community Gardeners. GreenThumb, a Parks program since 1995, is funded by federal Community Development Block Grants, which target low-income areas.

The largest community gardening program in the country, it has more than 500 member gardens serving 20,000 City residents. GreenThumb's services take the form of materials and technical assistance.

Mayor Bloomberg has led the way in his support for Parks' efforts to advance community greening by reaching an agreement with the New York State Attorney General's office to preserve nearly 500 community gardens while taking into account other important public needs like affordable housing.

The majority of GreenThumb gardens were derelict vacant lots renovated by volunteers. These community gardens, now managed by neighborhood residents, provide important green space, thus improving air quality, biodiversity and the well-being of residents.

The GreenThumb Program began in 1979. It was a response to the fiscal crisis of the 1970's, when a near-bankrupt City assumed ownership of vast numbers of properties abandoned by the private sector. The private owners had ceased maintaining the properties and had stopped paying taxes on them. For the City this meant more property to maintain, but less revenue with which to maintain it.

Some members of the public, most famously Liz Christy, began throwing seed bombs over the fences of abandoned vacant lots in an attempt to sow wildflower meadows, replacing a landscape of debris and despair with one of beauty and hope.

Ultimately the City decided to harness this impulse toward citizen action: through the GreenThumb Program members of the public were allowed to create community gardens on the properties which had recently come under City ownership. The Council on the Environment of New York City, a privately-funded organization within the Office of the Mayor, played the role of midwife at the birth of the GreenThumb program and has remained a partner to this day.

The benefits to individual gardeners of this new program included exercise, friendship and, in some cases, food. The benefits to the community were:

1. That beauty replaced blight,
2. That green replaced gray, and
3. That the social fabric of the neighborhood was strengthened.

The benefit to the City was property maintenance at minimal cost.

However, the City's intent was that community gardens would be a temporary use of property, a short-term response to a crisis, and that eventually the property would be returned to private ownership and the tax rolls. From time to time over the years that intent was challenged, most severely in 1998 when dozens of garden sites were put up for public auction. The reaction, widespread and passionate opposition, demonstrated that many New Yorkers believed that the physical and social benefits of community gardens were enduring benefits, valuable in good times as well as bad.

The initial result was that Bette Midler's New York Restoration Project and the Trust for Public Land stepped forward and were allowed to purchase and preserve 111 gardens.

The subsequent result, in 2002, was the preservation by the Bloomberg Administration of 198 additional gardens by transferring jurisdiction over them to the Parks Department. This result was codified in a legal agreement -- known as the **Garden Settlement** -- between the City of New York and the State of New York, represented by then-Attorney General, now Governor, Eliot Spitzer, who had filed a lawsuit during the previous Administration. The agreement allowed for the immediate development of 38 garden sites to meet the demand for new housing. The agreement also designated 114 garden sites as "subject to development," pending further public review. Most of those sites have now undergone that review, and the local community boards have endorsed their development for housing, some of which is already being built.

To those who follow these matters most closely, these facts are well known. What is far less well known is that the collaboration between the City and the State Attorney General has continued, fine-tuning the list of sites to be preserved as gardens and the list of sites to be developed for housing. As a result, additional well-tended gardens which would have disappeared have instead been saved, by being swapped for untended sites, so there would be no loss of new housing units.

In the end, a good settlement was made better. That achievement was made possible by the tone and framework created by Mayor Bloomberg and Governor Spitzer. Of course, it was implemented by government employees most New Yorkers have never heard of, people inspired by the example of their leaders, people who focused on the spirit of the enterprise, people determined to make the most of the opportunity, people not satisfied with "good enough." The City workers I am speaking of are Holly Leicht and Mary Bolton of HPD, Edie Stone of Parks,

and Chris Reo of the Law Department. Their work here was government at its best, both the will and the skill.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

What has happened since? First, we made **physical improvements** to many of the gardens, investments which were not possible or not prudent at temporary sites. The improvements include new fences, new sidewalks and new signage. Those are all improvements which contribute to what real estate professionals call "curb appeal," which can affect neighboring property values. Those improvements also make the gardens appear more permanent, more park-like. In this regard, the Mayor's Office of Management & Budget has been quite helpful, by making additional funds available for this work whenever possible.

Second, we increased the number of **workshops** we offer to gardeners who want to improve their skills. To increase workshop attendance, we scheduled the workshops for days when we were giving away seeds and bulbs and tools and other gardening supplies.

Third, we eliminated the requirement that gardens carry **liability insurance**. This allows the gardeners to devote more time to gardening and less to fundraising. This was a difficult issue, and the Law Department and the Mayor's Office considered it carefully before giving their approval.

Fourth, this year, for the first time, we are beginning on a small scale to use **City tax-levy dollars** to support community gardens. In the past, all of the funding for GreenThumb has come from Federal CD Funds. But when Commissioner Benepe was informed that some of our gardens were no longer eligible for CD funding because of changing neighborhood demographics, he authorized the use of tax-levy funds.

At this point we believe we have accomplished a great deal in the transition from temporary gardens to permanent ones, but **challenges** remain.

CHALLENGES

First, we want to increase the number of **hours the gardens are open** to the public. Public access is an essential attribute for a community garden. The most frequent complaint we receive about gardens is that access is limited. But providing access can be difficult for the gardeners. The typical garden is small, providing space for only a limited number of active gardeners, most of whom must work for a living, so their time in the garden is limited. And the gardeners, of course, are reluctant to have the gardens open when they cannot be there. In some neighborhoods there is a real risk of theft or vandalism.

Our minimum requirement is that all gardens be open at least 10 hours per week during the warm weather months from April through October. Some gardens struggle to meet the minimum; many do much better. We are encouraging all gardens to do better, even when that means accepting a degree of risk. Public access is that important. And after all, most Parks properties are regularly open for many hours each week when there is no staff present. We accept the risk as the cost of doing business, and most of the time we do so without incident.

Our second challenge has to do with **structures**. Most gardens have at least one, typically a small storage shed for the tools and supplies used in garden maintenance. Some gardens have additional structures which facilitate legitimate social functions of a garden: a stage, a gazebo, a casita, a work of art, or something else. All of these structures pose potential public safety issues, particularly fire or collapse. All must be safe. That is not a subject for debate. There is nothing political or cultural about it. It is an absolute.

During the past year we have conducted an inventory of all structures in gardens, using the Department of Buildings as our technical consultant. Our goal is that all structures be or become code-compliant. That will mean that some structures must be removed, others reduced in size, still others re-wired or de-wired. Some of that work is in progress. Some of it will take a while. All of it must be done. We have offered to help with removals and with pre-approved replacements.

A third challenge is to protect the gardens from **construction next door**. This one is somewhat ironic. We thought we had protected gardens from development, and we had protected them, from development on top of them. We had not anticipated the threat from the development next door, but that too, is a consequence of what has been a very hot real estate market.

Some developers think the gardens must be protected with scaffolding, which of course would destroy them. Other developers see the gardens as vacant lots which they should be able to use for excavating foundations or for construction staging and storage. Some contractors and construction workers are just careless and either drop things on the gardens or else undermine them and cause landslides.

In response to these threats, we now frequently dispatch PEP officers and attorneys from our affirmative litigation unit to these sites to stop damage and seek redress.

A fourth challenge is to revitalize our **school garden program**. A combination of personnel changes on our side and structural changes at the Department of Education means that we must start over and re-invent the school garden program. And we must proceed more on a retail basis, school by school, than on the previous wholesale basis dealing with the central staff at DOE.

Although time-consuming, this is worth doing because it fits with the larger issue of nutrition and nutrition education at a time when obesity, including child obesity, has become recognized as a major social problem. The Department of Health has done some important work here, and we have a role to play as well through Greenmarkets, Harvest-Sharing Programs, urban agriculture, and school gardens.

In closing, there is one final topic I should mention: the Land Restoration Program. Greenthumb has two divisions: one is Community Gardens, the other is Land Restoration, or LRP, which is much less well known. Land Restoration is a service GreenThumb provides to other City agencies, such as HPD, DCAS and EDC, which hold inventories of vacant land awaiting development. LRP cleans these lots, hydro-seeds them with wildflower mix and periodically mows them, creating neighborhood amenities where otherwise there might be illegal dump sites.

New York City Council Testimony
Monday September 24, 2007, 10:00 a.m.
Chambers of Councilwoman Helen Foster
250 Broadway, Manhattan

Res. No. 1033

Resolution calling upon the Mayor of the City of New York to preserve the existing Green Thumb Community Gardens and to set aside more parkland, open space and vacant lots to be developed as permanent Green Thumb Community Gardens.

Good morning, Councilwoman Foster. We are grateful to you for providing this important opportunity to speak on behalf of the large and diverse garden community in New York City. The benefits of gardens are many, and your support of our work is critical to meeting the food, recreation and open space needs of all New Yorkers.

My name is Julie Lawrence, and it is an honor and a pleasure to testify here today with our fellow gardeners and advocates. I am the Executive Director of the Bronx Land Trust, joined today by my Board member Tara Stand. We support, maintain, and will soon own 18 gardens in the Bronx. Working with our sister organizations, the Manhattan Land Trust and the Brooklyn Queens Land Trust, we represent nearly 70 gardens in four boroughs preserved since the 1999 NYC garden crisis by the Trust for Public Land. The three Land Trusts are led by gardeners and community folks in each of our boroughs, and our ranks number nearly 700 active gardeners city-wide.

Our gardens, and those around the city, were established by our members and fellow gardeners as early as 40 years ago. They now serve as models of community gardening throughout the world. Gardens are now being established in Berlin, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Budapest and South Africa -- to name a few -- where they serve as centers of healing and peace.

The Land Trusts are unique in that our gardens are privately owned and considered to be preserved in perpetuity. According to the terms of the 1999 settlement agreement, many City-owned gardens were only temporarily protected and are now, in fact, susceptible to intense development pressures in quickly gentrifying neighborhoods -- precisely those neighborhoods which were stabilized by the efforts of community gardeners.

Gardens provide:

- Access to badly-needed open space in NYC's lowest-income neighborhoods, those most underserved by the traditional park system
- Fresh, nutritional food in neighborhoods with few well-stocked grocery stores
- Community-created and supported projects such as food pantries, farmers markets, and children's educational programs
- A citizen-based, sweat equity solution to inadequate city-wide park resources
- A quiet, restorative oasis in the urban environment for youth, adults and elders alike to share the beauty and wonders of nature.

As City Council Parks Chair and a Bronx resident, it was inspiring to see you receive an award from the New York City Community Garden Coalition this spring at the Alhambra Ballroom in Harlem. We ask that you continue your long-standing efforts, and lead the Parks Committee and City Council to advocate for and support community gardens, particularly those which are now endangered throughout the City. The Bronx Land Trust looks forward to participating in those efforts with you, your fellow councilmembers, and our fellow community gardeners for years to come.

Thank you.

New York City Council Testimony
Monday September 24, 2007
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250 Broadway, Manhattan

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Resolution calling upon the Mayor of the City of New York to preserve the existing Green Thumb Community Gardens and to set aside more parkland, open space and vacant lots to be developed as permanent Green Thumb Community Gardens.

Councilwoman Foster:

My name is Cyril Joseph, and I am here representing the Linden-Bushwick Block Association Garden in Bushwick, Brooklyn.

Ours is an unique situation: a garden consisting of two distinct spaces, one corner lot, currently under renovation, and another 19,000-square-foot, landlocked space, a small section of which has been used as a vegetable garden for many years.

This interior space is reputedly located on the grounds of an old horse riding academy. While it is currently covered with a carpet of garbage and construction debris, we see it as being full of potential as a beautiful, open green space for all to enjoy.

What makes this garden's situation unique is that it is all on land sold by the city to the NYC Public Development Corporation, which sold the land in 1988 - so it is now private property. In the deed, the interior land is protected, while the corner lot is less so, being defined as a garden in legal documents only as "a portion of the unimproved section of the Property." To complicate matters, access to the massive inner space can only be gained through this semi-protected area. Further renovations to the inner space are contingent upon permanently securing the outer lot.

If renovated, the massive interior space could encompass vegetable gardens, an open-air classroom, a playground, and areas for social gatherings.

It is in complicated matters such as these that groups such as ours need the support - in the form of both legal and financial aid - of a strong local government committed to the health and welfare of the area community.

Bushwick is an area in dire need of more friendly, green spaces - and it is not the only one. We implore the Mayor, the Parks Committee and City Council to increase their efforts in preserving and developing unused open spaces for the physical, mental, and spiritual health of all citizens of New York City.

Thank you.

NEW YORK ENVIRONMENTAL LAW & JUSTICE PROJECT

member of the Clean Water Network, Community Right to Know Network

National Lawyers Guild- Environmental Justice Committee

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Re: RESOLUTION - COMMUNITY GARDENS

We commend your action in proposing the resolution calling upon the Mayor of the City of New York to preserve the existing Green Thumb Community Gardens and to set aside more parkland, open space and vacant lots to be developed as permanent Green Thumb Community Gardens.

As an environmental lawyer that has advocated for and represented the Community Garden Movement, I speak with personal experience and witnessed the myriad of benefits that these Gardens offer. One of the saddest days of my life as a community attorney and New Yorker was the day that Esperanza Garden was bulldozed.

But now, many of us have grown older and wiser, and I hope stronger.

Today and tomorrow - hundreds of countries' leaders and non-profit organizations are meeting at and near the United Nations---- with global warming being a major topic of discussion and concern


What better way than for City Council to help the fight against global warming by preserving these green oases in the midst of heat sink of New York City.

Over 70 parks are now using artificial turf --- areas that face 160 degrees in the summer. And that are costing the city millions of dollars - let alone the loss of vegetation especially the veteran trees.

Community gardens contain many of the veteran trees found in New York City - whose ecological benefits are exponential. I am attaching a study conducted by the United States Forest Service - Urban Statio comparing the ecological value old veteran trees to newly planted saplings

For many New Yorkers, these community gardens are the only refuge from the heat, the dust, the dank and the din of urban life.

Yours...


Joel R. Kupferman, Esq.
September 24, 2007

THE EFFECTS OF URBAN TREES ON AIR QUALITY

David J. Nowak
USDA Forest Service, Syracuse, NY

Urban vegetation can directly and indirectly affect local and regional air quality by altering the urban atmospheric environment. The four main ways that urban trees affect air quality are^a:

- Temperature reduction and other microclimatic effects
- Removal of air pollutants
- Emission of volatile organic compounds and tree maintenance emissions
- Energy effects on buildings

Temperature Reduction: Tree transpiration and tree canopies affect air temperature, radiation absorption and heat storage, wind speed, relative humidity, turbulence, surface albedo, surface roughness and consequently the evolution of the mixing-layer height. These changes in local meteorology can alter pollution concentrations in urban areas^b. Although trees usually contribute to cooler summer air temperatures, their presence can increase air temperatures in some instances^c. In areas with scattered tree canopies, radiation can reach and heat ground surfaces; at the same time, the canopy may reduce atmospheric mixing such that cooler air is prevented from reaching the area. In this case, tree shade and transpiration may not compensate for the increased air temperatures due to reduced mixing^d. Maximum mid-day air temperature reductions due to trees are in the range of 0.04°C to 0.2°C per percent canopy cover increase^e. Below individual and small groups of trees over grass, mid-day air temperatures at 1.5 m above ground are 0.7°C to 1.3°C cooler than in an open area^f. Reduced air temperature due to trees can improve air quality because the emission of many pollutants and/or ozone-forming chemicals are temperature dependent. Decreased air temperature can also reduce ozone formation.

Removal of Air Pollutants: Trees remove gaseous air pollution primarily by uptake via leaf stomata, though some gases are removed by the plant surface. Once inside the leaf, gases diffuse into intercellular spaces and may be absorbed by water films to form acids or react with inner-leaf surfaces^g. Trees also remove pollution by intercepting airborne particles. Some particles can be absorbed into the tree, though most particles that are intercepted are retained on the plant surface. The intercepted particle often is resuspended to the atmosphere, washed off by rain, or dropped to the ground with leaf and twig fall^h. Consequently, vegetation is only a temporary retention site for many atmospheric particles.

In 1994, trees in New York City removed an estimated 1,821 metric tons of air pollution at an estimated value to society of \$9.5 million. Air pollution removal by urban forests in New York was greater than in Atlanta (1,196 t; \$6.5 million) and Baltimore (499 t; \$2.7 million), but pollution removal per m² of canopy cover was fairly similar among these cities (New York: 13.7 g/m²/yr; Baltimore: 12.2 g/m²/yr; Atlanta: 10.6 g/m²/yr)^h. These standardized pollution removal rates differ among cities according to the amount of air pollution, length of in-leaf season, precipitation, and other meteorological variables. Large healthy trees greater than 77 cm in diameter remove approximately 70 times more air pollution annually (1.4 kg/yr) than small healthy trees less than 8 cm in diameter (0.02 kg/yr)^k.

Air quality improvement in New York City due to pollution removal by trees during daytime of the in-leaf season averaged 0.47% for particulate matter, 0.45% for ozone, 0.43% for sulfur dioxide, 0.30% for nitrogen dioxide, and 0.002% for carbon monoxide. Air quality improves

with increased percent tree cover and decreased mixing-layer heights. In urban areas with 100% tree cover (i.e., contiguous forest stands), short-term improvements in air quality (one hour) from pollution removal by trees were as high as 15% for ozone, 14% for sulfur dioxide, 13% for particulate matter, 8% for nitrogen dioxide, and 0.05% for carbon monoxide^h.

Emission of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs): Emissions of volatile organic compounds by trees can contribute to the formation of ozone and carbon monoxide. However, in atmospheres with low nitrogen oxide concentrations (e.g., some rural environments), VOCs may actually remove ozone^{ij}. Because VOC emissions are temperature dependent and trees generally lower air temperatures, increased tree cover can lower overall VOC emissions and, consequently, ozone levels in urban areas^l.

VOC emission rates also vary by species. Nine genera that have the highest standardized isoprene emission rate^{m,n}, and therefore the greatest relative effect among genera on increasing ozone, are: beefwood (*Casuarina* spp.), *Eucalyptus* spp., sweetgum (*Liquidambar* spp.), black gum (*Nyssa* spp.), sycamore (*Platanus* spp.), poplar (*Populus* spp.), oak (*Quercus* spp.), black locust (*Robinia* spp.), and willow (*Salix* spp.). However, due to the high degree of uncertainty in atmospheric modeling, results are currently inconclusive as to whether these genera will contribute to an overall net formation of ozone in cities (i.e., ozone formation from VOC emissions are greater than ozone removal). Some common genera in Brooklyn, NY, with the greatest relative effect on lowering ozone were mulberry (*Morus* spp.), cherry (*Prunus* spp.), linden (*Tilia* spp.) and honey locust (*Gleditsia* sp.)ⁿ.

Because urban trees often receive relatively large inputs of energy, primarily from fossil fuels, to maintain vegetation structure, the emissions from these maintenance activities need to be considered in determining the ultimate net effect of urban forests on air quality. Various types of equipment are used to plant, maintain, and remove vegetation in cities. These equipment include various vehicles for transport or maintenance, chain saws, back hoes, leaf blowers, chippers, and shredders. The use and combustion of fossil fuels to power this equipment leads to the emission of carbon dioxide (approximately 0.7 kg/l of gasoline, including manufacturing emissions^o) and other chemicals such as VOCs, carbon monoxide, nitrogen and sulfur oxides, and particulate matter^p.

Trees in parking lots can also affect evaporative emissions from vehicles, particularly through tree shade. Increasing parking lot tree cover from 8% to 50% could reduce Sacramento County, CA, light duty vehicle VOC evaporative emission rates by 2% and nitrogen oxide start emissions by less than 1%^q.

Energy Effects on Buildings: Trees reduce building energy use by lowering temperatures and shading buildings during the summer, and blocking winds in winter^r. However, they also can increase energy use by shading buildings in winter, and may increase or decrease energy use by blocking summer breezes. Thus, proper tree placement near buildings is critical to achieve maximum building energy conservation benefits.

When building energy use is lowered, pollutant emissions from power plants are also lowered. While lower pollutant emissions generally improve air quality, lower nitrogen oxide emissions, particularly ground-level emissions, may lead to a local increase in ozone concentrations under certain conditions due to nitrogen oxide scavenging of ozone^s. The cumulative and interactive effects of trees on meteorology, pollution removal, and VOC and power plant emissions determine the overall impact of trees on air pollution.

Combined Effects: Changes in urban microclimate can affect pollution emission and formation, particularly the formation of ozone. A model simulation of a 20 percent loss in the Atlanta area forest due to urbanization led to a 14 percent increase in ozone concentrations for a modeled day¹. Although there were fewer trees to emit VOCs, an increase in Atlanta's air temperatures due to the urban heat island, which occurred concomitantly with tree loss, increased VOC emissions from the remaining trees and anthropogenic sources, and altered ozone chemistry such that concentrations of ozone increased.

A model simulation of California's South Coast Air Basin suggests that the air quality impacts of increased urban tree cover may be locally positive or negative with respect to ozone. The net basin-wide effect of increased urban vegetation is a decrease in ozone concentrations if the additional trees are low VOC emitters¹.

Modeling the effects of increased urban tree cover on ozone concentrations from Washington, DC to central Massachusetts reveals that urban trees generally reduce ozone concentrations in cities, but tend to slightly increase average ozone concentrations in the overall modeling domain. Interactions of the effects of trees on the physical and chemical environment demonstrate that trees can cause changes in pollution removal rates and meteorology, particularly air temperatures, wind fields, and mixing-layer heights, which, in turn, affect ozone concentrations. Changes in urban tree species composition had no detectable effect on ozone concentrations¹. Modeling of the New York City metropolitan area also reveal that increasing tree cover 10% with urban areas reduced maximum ozone levels by about 4 ppb^v.

Urban Forest Management: Urban forest management strategies to help improve air quality include^w:

- Increase the number of healthy trees (increases pollution removal).
- Sustain existing tree cover (maintains pollution removal levels).
- Maximize use of low VOC emitting trees (reduces ozone and carbon monoxide formation).
- Sustain large, healthy trees (large trees have greatest per tree effects).
- Use long-lived trees (reduces long-term pollutant emissions from planting and removal).
- Use low maintenance trees (reduces pollutants emissions from maintenance activities).
- Reduce fossil fuel use in maintaining vegetation (reduces pollutant emissions).
- Plant trees in energy conserving locations (reduces pollutant emissions from power plants).
- Plant trees to shade parked cars (reduces vehicular VOC emissions).
- Supply ample water to vegetation (enhances pollution removal and temperature reduction).
- Plant trees in polluted areas or heavily populated areas (maximizes tree air quality benefits).
- Avoid pollutant sensitive species (increases tree health).
- Utilize evergreen trees for particulate matter reduction (year-round removal of particles).

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Statement read at the Parks committee, NY City Council
September 24, 2007
By Ellen Belcher, Community Garden Coordinator
Time's Up! www.times-up.org

My name is Ellen Belcher and I am the community garden coordinator for Time's Up! We are a direct action and education environmental group that has long fought for free and open community spaces, especially community gardens in New York City.

Time's Up! has worked with many gardens and garden activists to start, maintain and protect community gardens in all five boroughs. We have participated in civil disobedience and direct action to defend gardens from encroaching development and from sell offs by the city. The garden agreement set forth by Eliot Spitzer some time ago was a victory we shared with many other groups, but we know that the fight is not over. We continue to work with endangered and unprotected gardens to defend their spaces and grow green spaces and community in our gardens.

As a result, through our street/garden parties, garden bike tours and garden workdays, we have connected to New York City communities that we would never have normally met, while helping to grow their gardens and neighborhoods. All New Yorkers have a right to open space, trees, green grass, flowers, herbs, air, sun, dirt and community, within walking distance of their homes.

We have recently been working with the Children's Magical Garden de Carmen Rubio, a decades-old garden exclusively for children, which grows on the Lower East Side. This garden is now threatened because the city has proposed to sell the garden's city owned lots to a developer that owns a small sliver of garden land. The resolution in discussion today would go a long way to offering protection to such endangered green spaces. In this space the children run around and ride bikes and scooters in a space that they can call their own. We look forward to soon helping out with a Garden Pizza Party when the young gardeners will harvest the vegetables and herbs that they have been growing all summer and make them into pizza. And we are ready to defend this garden for these and future children whenever it becomes necessary.

Time's Up! and other activist groups continue to be prepared to defend all community gardens against the unchecked development and mass sell-off of city-owned lots through direct action and civil disobedience. Media stories of children standing in front of bulldozers, activists locked down in gardens, and climbing trees to protect them certainly does not match the new vision of New York as set out this city government's plan for a greener NYC. Passing of the proposed resolution will help us to avoid such conflicts and concentrate on growing sustainable green community spaces which benefit all New Yorkers.

HEARING TESTIMONY

Parks Committee

September 24, 2007

Subject: Community Gardens & Green Thumb Gardens

The Council of the City of New York
The Honorable Helen Diane Foster, Chairperson - Parks Committee
Members of the Parks Committee
Friends, Supporters, and Fellow Community Gardeners

My name is Alex Brown. I live at 1833 7th Avenue which is within the jurisdiction of Manhattan Community Board 10 represented by City Councilperson Inez Dickens. I come to you today representing the Harlem United Gardens (HUG) coalition, a coalition of community gardens (totally 32 gardens at time of the 2002 resolution...and currently with a membership of 8 gardens), and a Board Member of the NYC Community Gardens Coalition representing over 200 gardens in the 5 boroughs of NYC.

I would first like to give you a short history of "how and why" I became involved with Harlem community gardens. I am originally from a state whose motto is "Wild and Wonderful", but I prefer the one that seems the most comforting to me...Almost Heaven West Virginia. In 1999 when I arrived in Harlem, after a couple of months in my area of W. 112th Street & 7th Avenue, I noticed a very huge open space that made me feel so much like I was ...in "almost heaven". To see a space in NYC of all places, greens, tomatoes, flowers of all types, even rose bushes (which my mother adored)...occasionally after work, I would walk by and see elders of the community seating in the shades, in the familiar chairs, talking, playing cards, dominoes, mothers and fathers working together, and children as well.

I just had to be a part of it....and ladies and gentlemen from that point I was "hooked on green space"! But unfortunately, as I got more involved, I found out that our garden was an "endangered" garden...one of the most sought after spaces in Harlem ..at the time! In fact, upon the completion of the agreement between the Mayor and the Attorney General, my garden was one

of the 10 gardens that was IMMEDIATELY signed by Mayor Bloomberg for development....

During that time, I was motivated by a wonderful gentlemen and true Harlemiter and community organizer, Mr. Charles Cole of the United Associated Gardeners group to organize those gardens in the Central, East, and North Harlem areas who were categorized as "subject to development" to form HUG. Our objective was to organize a coalition that would form a body, not individual gardens, that would provide support in defense of green space and community gardening in Harlem.

As of today's we are fighting a losing battle. Right now as we speak 20 gardens in our Coalition are facing a losing battle. If it were not for the tireless efforts of City Councilpersons **Melissa Mark Viverito** and **Robert Jackson**, in both defense and support of gardens in their districts, community gardens would face the fate unlike most in other districts...that to the fate of development...so called affordable housing. The irony also is that included in my distress is that I have two city council persons on either side of my district, and my own City Councilperson, **Inez Dickens**, in our, the Harlem United Gardeners, numerous efforts to have a meeting to discuss our issues...has not committed once to having a meeting with us.....is establishing a tax base in our community more important than quality of life.....preservation of nature's beauty....

I come today to ask that you, the City Council, to not forget about us....although we are little in numbers and unlike developers, have little financial backing. That you will find that the only way we were able to sustain the 1st wave of raft of community gardening was through legislation. And that is why I ask that you support Resolution No. 1033 which calls for supporting and existing Green Thumb Gardens, setting aside of more parkland, open space, and vacant lots to be developed as Green Thumb Community Gardens....

More Gardens!

Education & Downtown office
79 Clinton Street #17
NY, NY, 10002
(212) 533-8019

Monday, September 24, 2007

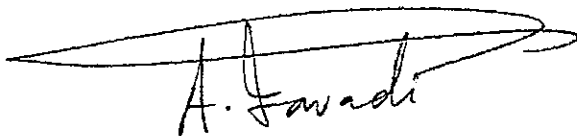
Dear Council Parks Committee,

We wholeheartedly approve of this resolution and ask for it to be acted upon as quickly as possible.

The grassroots greening movement started during the seventies with long-sighted angels in the communities acting as stewards of environmental justice, food justice, overall well-being, and peace to the eyes and heart. These needs were rooted and grown in a cultural setting unique to each neighborhood and immensely critical for our participation and balance with our living earth.

40,000 vacant lots, close to a hundred bulldozed community gardens, over hundreds of thousands of petitions to preserve community gardens, over hundreds of demonstrations and many civil disobediences and arrests later, we are at a turning point where all parties agree to the importance, permanence, support and creation of more community gardens.

Let this resolution be acted upon with the outmost urgency and importance, as a first step in healing, maintaining and being able to continue our harmonious existence on our precious earth.



Aresh Javadi,
co - founder
More Gardens!



Testimony – NY City Council Hearing on Community Gardens

Hannah Riseley-White
Green Guerillas
(212) 594-2155
info@nycgreen.org

Green Guerillas has been helping grassroots groups cultivate, manage, and preserve community gardens in New York City since 1973. Currently, Green Guerillas uses a mix of organizing, outreach, and education to:

- Help community garden groups recruit volunteers, increase membership, and spur community participation in their gardens so community gardens serve as active, open public spaces and community centers.
- Boost food production in neighborhoods by helping community gardeners grow more fresh healthy food for their family tables and for distribution to emergency food providers. This past growing season, Green Guerillas helped 30 community garden groups in Bedford-Stuyvesant grow more than 25,000 pounds of fruits and vegetables.
- Help people take advantage of new opportunities to grow food in the City. This year, Green Guerillas obtained site control over a 19,000 square foot lot in Ocean Hill/Brownsville, organized a garden group, and helped the group grow more than 2,000 pounds of fruits and vegetables.
- Foster and support partnerships between community garden groups and local nonprofits to distribute food, educate people about environmental issues, engage youth, and increase the positive impact of community gardens on neighborhoods.
- Serve as the fiscal sponsor for grants to community garden groups. This fiscal year alone, Green Guerillas is helping community garden groups manage more than \$20,000 in grants, including \$13,000 in City Council discretionary grants.

What can the City Council do to support community gardens and increase local food production in NYC?

Funding: Here is where City money can make the most difference:

- Fund *organizing efforts* that aim to increase food production in underutilized community gardens. This includes: 1) neighborhood outreach 2) public awareness campaigns, 3) identifying underused garden spaces and connecting potential urban farmers with those sites
- Fund City *staff* housed in the GreenThumb program whose specific role is to develop urban agriculture policy, outreach and assistance
- Funding for *basic resources* necessary for food production – healthy soil, composting programming and agriculture education
- Fund *new farmers market* development projects that help new urban farmers make our city more environmentally and economically sustainable while providing fresh produce to our neighborhoods

Building Partnerships

- Encourage your fellow city council representatives to connect with and support the community gardens in their districts
- Support the efforts of Green Guerillas and other groups to help community garden groups make mutually beneficial connections to local groups – schools, community based organizations, churches, emergency food providers

PlaNYC 2030: Encourage Mayor Bloomberg to include community gardens and urban food programming in his PlaNYC 2030 campaign.

September 24, 2007
Hearing Re: Community Gardens and Operation Green Thumb
Committee on Parks and Recreation

Good morning, I'm Ursula Chanse, Director of Bronx Green-Up and Community Horticulture at The New York Botanical Garden. **I am in support of Resolution No. 1033.**

Community gardens are at the heart of Bronx Green-Up (BGU), the community outreach program of The New York Botanical Garden. Formed in 1988, with much of the Bronx reeling after two decades of decline, Bronx Green-Up was established to join the momentum and passion of Bronx residents in creating beautiful green oases out of garbage-strewn vacant lots.

As every gardener knows, nurturing and caring for gardens is hard work. Bronx Green-Up continues to support community members in their volunteer efforts to provide long-term maintenance for these community green spaces. BGU provides horticultural advice, technical assistance and training, and seeds, bulbs, and plants. Every year Bronx Green-Up also offers more than 20 bilingual workshops and three certificate programs with training in pruning and composting for those with a deeper interest in horticulture. BGU also organizes quarterly community events, bringing gardeners together to network, share ideas, and celebrate.

Now more than ever green spaces are needed in the Bronx. Much of the Bronx still faces environmental and public health challenges, including poor air quality and pollution as well as higher rates of food insecurity and chronic disease such as obesity, diabetes and asthma. The South Bronx has one of the highest asthma rates in the country. Increasingly, green spaces are becoming recognized as part of a comprehensive solution that addresses these disparities and builds more sustainable neighborhoods. Community gardens make vital contributions by providing areas of greenery and beauty and offering a mental respite from the surrounding buildings and concrete—all while plants clean the air.

Community gardens are key because they provide a place to grow fresh fruit and vegetables. Many neighborhoods in the Bronx have few or no supermarkets, making it difficult for people to have access to affordable, fresh produce. Community gardens have always served as a local source of fresh produce, providing nutrition to gardeners, their families, neighbors, and local food pantries. And community gardens are also leading the way by creating neighborhood farmer's markets, providing an even larger community with an opportunity to increase their fresh fruits and vegetables intake.

Hand in hand with nutrition, is physical activity in addressing obesity and related diseases. Gardening has long been a physical activity to promote one's health, and by providing a green space to walk too, especially in hot summer months, as well as safe places for children to actively learn in, community gardens are a rich resource.

Gardens also serve other critical roles in the neighborhood. They provide areas for adults to socialize and network, for everyone to learn about the environment and nutrition, a place to celebrate and preserve one's culture, and to become more active and engaged in the community.

In addition to these vital functions that help to sustain and build a community, community gardens also serve as leaders in other sustainable practices. Many gardens incorporate rainwater harvesting systems, which collect rainwater and reduce stormwater run off, a critical environmental problem that the City continues to face.

In partnership with the City's Department of Sanitation, Bronx Green-Up promotes composting as an essential horticulture practice as well as a waste reduction strategy. Instead of becoming part of the garbage problem, with many difficulties and environmental and health consequences in transportation and disposal, organic waste can be turned into something valuable to enrich the soil naturally and locally. Community gardeners are leaders in composting, reducing garden and food waste that would otherwise be transported to a landfill, and teaching others in the community about this important environmental practice.

Community gardens, tucked away in many neighborhoods, are invaluable, unique resources. These gardens, sustained by volunteer efforts, often need additional support and resources to strengthen the infrastructure and programming opportunities that they provide. Increasing community gardens, when the opportunities arise, particularly, in areas with less open space, will aid the City's efforts in creating a healthier, greener and more sustainable city.

Thank you for your time.

Submitted by:

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Testimony prepared by Jeanlee M. Poggi, volunteer Executive Director, West 181st Street Beautification Project (in Washington Heights, northern Manhattan)
For the Hearing held by the Parks Committee, City Council, on Monday, September 24 at 10 a.m. regarding Community Gardens and Green Thumb Gardens—Resolution 1033

Respect and best wishes to the committee and everybody here. I'm Jeanlee Poggi, the volunteer executive director of the West 181st Street Beautification Project.

As one of the leaders of a community garden in Washington Heights in northern Manhattan, I support and deeply appreciate Resolution 1033 calling upon the Mayor to preserve the existing Green Thumb Community Gardens and to set aside more parkland, open space and vacant lots to be developed as permanent Green Thumb Community Gardens.

We know that our garden has made a difference—a beautiful difference—in our neighborhood. And we would like for the garden to be a legacy for future generations of neighbors. We have explored many options and it is clear to us that the only way to create that legacy is to have the garden mapped as parkland.

Let me say a few words about our GreenThumb garden at West 181 Street and Pinehurst Avenue. It is the only garden we know of that is on a Department of Transportation Step Street. (It is therefore a D.O.T. property and is designated as a "special site" by GreenThumb). Pinehurst Avenue is interrupted by a long flight of steps; on either side are 11 terraces (22 in all). When our organization started working there 21 years ago, it was a garbage dump. Over the years, neighbors transformed it into a lovely garden. Then DOT had to reconstruct the steps and much of the garden was destroyed. With the help of hundreds of neighbors who wrote letters, made phone calls, went to meetings, and sent faxes we were able to get the garden restored as part of the DOT contract. Now there are benches at landings on the steps where passersby can sit and schmooze, seniors can rest and catch their breath, and neighbors can relax. And there is an attractive garden for all to enjoy. But it is still, legally speaking, a stepstreet not a garden and its continuing status as open space is not protected. So we want it to be mapped as parkland.

We have been told that to get the garden mapped as parkland, we would have to go through the ULURP procedure. That procedure would take at least 2 years, involving presentation to many, many city agencies, and is so intricate it would be necessary to hire a consultant who specializes in handling this technically very difficult process. This would require a fee of \$25,000 to \$35,000.

That's twice our organization's annual budget for all our programs (we also run a youth leadership training program and a summer playground and assist with the annual Little Red Lighthouse Festival and oversee a greenstreet garden)!

If we have to go through the ULURP procedure and the costs involved, we will do it. Somehow.

(over)

But we dread the expenditures of time, energy, and money involved. It would be much better to put our efforts into continuing to help our young people, into making all our neighborhood open spaces beautiful for all our neighbors, and involving new neighbors in our work.

And we are aware that few gardens could endure the stress and labor involved in making their space into parkland through the ULURP procedure.

So I hope on behalf of all our Green Thumb gardens that a way will be found to leave our beautiful work as a legacy for future generations, by granting all of our gardens Parks Department status.

In closing, I would like to express our appreciation for the ongoing support of our City Councilman Robert Jackson, who has helped us so much with our garden and with our youth programs. And I would like to thank the Parks Committee for this resolution and for all that your members have done to keep our gardens growing.

Dear Legislators:

Approximately, forty years ago, the East Bronx, Southeast Bronx, Harlem, East Harlem, Brownsville, East New York and other impoverished communities looked like a war zone. Burned out houses, vacant lots and rundown buildings were very prevalent in the aforementioned areas. Additionally, there were considerable number of inhabitants departing these communities because of then-existing conditions such as vacant lots that were used as dumping grounds which bred vermin and other disease carrying pests.

Enduring these conditions, most of the people in the communities stayed and rebuilt these areas. With the help of the city and the parks department (Green Thumb), the lots were cleaned and fenced off. The community residents started what is now known as community gardening. Many hours of hard work (planting, weeding, tilling and cultivating the soil) were put into the gardens to yield food, beautification of the lots and areas for residents to sit, relax and enjoy the outdoors.

For over thirty years, we continued to maintain the gardens for the community's pleasures. These gardens became gathering places for meetings, block parties, cook-outs and most importantly, as a lab-classroom for many schools in the areas. In conjunction with many of the schools, the students began growing plants in containers in February and in April these plants were transplanted by the children in the garden beds as a classroom science project. I could elaborate more as to the process but I know that you get the picture.

Not only did the community gardens provide the aforementioned amenities for its inhabitants, it brought neighborhoods together throughout the city. The gardens served as a catalyst for other communities to exchange ideas, help solve problems and create a network to fight the developers from taking the gardens for huge profits in their development of so-called "affordable" housing. This practice would not be such a bone of contention if, in fact, the housing were truly affordable. The prices do not fit the income of the people who need the houses. In addition, there are no joint planning or communication with the residents who are affected by the decision to build on the garden sites.

There seems to be no consideration for the gardeners. For many, many years, they volunteered the time and hard work to turn empty abandoned lots into beautiful gardens to be enjoyed by the residents in the community. The powers that be feel that they can come in and do what they want and displace the gardeners at will. This flagrant disregard of courtesy and propriety, and the arrogant assumption of privilege, are attitudes and posture we have had to fight against and in some cases endure for the past ten years.

We need, at this juncture, some type of legislation to correct this problem with a reasonable solution for all involved. As legislators, it is incumbent upon you to protect these communities so that the residents will not be victims of this overdevelopment. This problem could cause many social ills, such as air pollution (not enough oxygen due to lack of greenery), overcrowding of schools, insufficient after-school programs and increase in crime, just to mention a few.

There are many injustices connected with the dissolution of the community gardens. We ask you as our representatives to investigate all angles and with input from the community help to reach a solution.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cordelia Gilford". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed name.

Cordelia Gilford



The Horticultural Society of New York

148 West 37th Street, 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018

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Committee hearing regarding Community Gardens and Operation of GreenThumb Testimony by Alex Feleppa, HSNY Director of Horticulture

A historical and cultural institution here in the city, The Horticultural Society of New York was formed over 105 years ago. At that time, it was primarily a group of gentlemen scientists who got together to share their horticultural knowledge and expertise. Over time, as the city has evolved to the environment we know it to be today, HSNY evolved as well. We have come to see that there are so many communities and individuals throughout the city that are unable to reach their full potential of understanding the natural world around them. We all want the city to be greener and healthier as we move into the future, and it is only if we work together to achieve that goal that we will succeed. That is why HSNY chooses to reach out to and educate those that otherwise would not receive the necessary stimulus to grow and flourish. In public schools throughout the city we have a program called Appleseed, with educators teaching supplemental earth science curriculums designed to further educate children of the intricacies of the natural world, its plants, insects, and wildlife. In the summer we keep those young minds growing with an interactive literacy program called Read & Seed taught at New York public libraries where HSNY has a presence through a program called GreenBranches. GreenBranches is another outreach program where we design with local communities and install for local communities professional, sustainable gardens outside of their library branches. These gardens are not just sanctuaries of green, but they are also actively used living classrooms where patrons can take their gained knowledge beyond the bookshelves. Knowledge is crucial, but experiential learning is how we convince people of all ages how they too can make a difference and make our world a greener place. We even work with men and women at the Greenhouse on Riker's Island Jail teaching them horticulture so they have a new skill and challenge to work towards. And with newfound skills and determination, those individuals emerge with a sense of focus and ability that prevents the great majority of them from falling into the same traps they fell into before. These same men and women become members of our GreenTeam, and go to work planting vibrant gardens all over the city. We work with public and private organizations, educators as well as their students, everyone from young children to senior citizens. During a recent garden visit I found a GreenTeam member and now good friend of mine teaching a whole group of volunteers from out of state how to plant a garden, and it gave me goose bumps to think about how that knowledge is going to be spread far beyond our five boroughs. We are never too old to learn, and I have seen how those lessons have exponential impacts within local communities. Knowing how to appreciate and care for the natural world around us, empowered minds will continue to spread horticultural knowledge and foster sustainable



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and diverse communities. It's up to us to share our knowledge and love of the natural world with everyone around us.

The Horticultural Society of New York has been a long time supporter of the community gardening movement here in the city. As we demonstrate through our own community outreach programs the most important thing is providing green space and community outlet in underserved areas where kids and adults are least educated about the importance of green space, and the nutritional and health benefits of plants. Certainly we stand behind the creation and maintenance of green space especially in NYC where we have less than half the public parkland of most American cities (Int. No. 206). Regular physical activity promotes health and happiness for gardeners of all ages. As global warming and natural phenomena become more serious, the additional environmental education in these gardens makes individuals more aware and conscious of how their actions impact the environment. The cultural variation of community gardeners and their plantings further demonstrates how New York City has the most diverse cultures from around the world living and working peacefully together. We applaud groups such as CENYC for incorporating progressive green technology such as rain and water harvesting systems. According to Int. No. 206 by New York City Council members, "The city has never created a comprehensive planning document that includes GreenThumb Gardens as part of a neighborhood or citywide infrastructure yet affordable housing and accessible green open spaces like GreenThumb Gardens work together to improve the overall quality of life in a neighborhood". I believe that GreenThumb Gardens should be incorporated as part of the City infrastructure. I agree that there should be management agreements with set responsibilities and checkpoints. Creation and installation of community gardens is the first step, but maintenance planning is crucial for the long-term sustainability of these green spaces. Giving greater responsibility to the Garden Groups who care for these gardens increases the level of caring and determination to keep these spaces beautiful. GreenThumb as a liaison between the gardeners and Parks ensures that assistance with tools and materials and education continue to promote the successful upkeep as issues such as plant pests and diseases come about. It is important that we incorporate all members of the community to helping care for these gardens as each individual has unique knowledge and contributions to offer.

**Karen Washington, La Familia Verde and NYC Community Garden Coalition
Council Hearing on Community Gardens
September 24, 2007 10am**

We need to start looking at the next step for community gardens. In the beginning, community gardens were valued for beautification, but now community gardeners are being recognized as part of sustainable agriculture. Farm Aid 2007 helped to spotlight community gardens as urban farms, and to highlight the need for sustainable agriculture and for NYC to be growing its own produce. The city needs to start looking at community gardens as urban farms and we need tools and resources to make that happen.

- **Garden Tools** – Every garden needs wrought-iron fences, rainwater harvesting systems, soil testing, solar panels, garden tools. (**Recommendations** - increase money to capital budget, work with Green Thumb & Council on the Environment to distribute tools)
- **Greenhouses** – Greenhouses in every community garden would extend the growing season and increase the amount of produce in the city. (**Recommendations** – Greenhouses in the capital budget)
- **Funding** - Set funding aside directly for infrastructure in community gardens – There are over 500 community gardens in NYC and they need a lot of support. (**Recommendations** - increase capital and discretionary funding for gardens – work with Green Thumb to distribute)
- **Support City Farms Farmers Markets** – Support and help increase the number of community-gardener run farmers markets where gardeners sell their produce, donate their produce, and record the yield. (**Recommendations** - support Just Food, Green Thumb)
 - There are several different market networks and types of markets - Greenmarkets, Harvest Markets, City Farms markets, others. City Farms Markets are run by community people and supported by Just Food. The revenue generated stays in the community, and it's a way of building pride and ownership.
- **Markets - Permission in Parks** – When feasible, allow farmers markets to be near or in City Parks. Reason is that farmers markets near City Parks bring people into the park. (**Recommendations** - Give community gardeners permission to run farmers markets on Parks perimeters, at no cost; work with DOT to secure parking for farmers and their trucks; work with Green Thumb, Just Food, community boards, and DOT)
- **Markets - Vehicle for City Farms farmers markets** – Right now City Farms markets are using personal vehicles, station wagons, cars, and rented Uhauls. (**Recommendations** – Donate a vehicle from the Parks Department, private industry, city agencies to each City Farms market)
- **Markets - Advertisements** – (**Recommendations** - support from the city to advertise City Farms markets on buses, trains, and in City Council weekly newsletters. Farmers Market Federation signs to be hung on light poles at no cost.)

- **Record Keeping of Garden Yields** – Help put a system in place where data is kept on how much food each garden can produce. The system needs to be accessible for gardeners. (**Recommendations** - Partnership with organizations that are willing to work on this and are already doing it – Just Food? Council on the Environment? Green Thumb?)
- **Value Added Products** - The city needs to support gardeners creating value added products which can be made and sold throughout the growing season. Gardeners need a processing plant/commercial kitchen where community gardeners can produce and sell value added products – can be revenue generating for gardeners. (**Recommendations** – Provide and help set up commercial kitchens for community gardens – work with Department of Ag & Markets)
- **Urban Farm Designation** – Land not fit for development and community gardens with low or no members can be set aside and designated as urban agricultural sites. (**Recommendations** – work with Green Thumb to create a new designation for urban farm sites)
- **School programs** – Community gardens need to be used as learning centers. A connection needs to be made with schools and gardens need to be placed in the curriculum so young kids learn where food comes from. NY Botanical Garden has a curriculum that some schools have tried, and Council on the Environment is working with Morris High School. and the John Bowne High School in Queens (**Recommendations** – These programs need to be expanded, and curriculums need to be made city wide – NY Botanical Garden, Council on the Environment)
- **Apprenticeships** - Youth need to get involved with community gardens as apprenticeship program. Youth can be vendors and get vendors licenses to sell produce and fruit. (**Recommendations** - Vendor licenses to teenagers; provide summer youth to City Farms farmers markets)
- **City tours** – Could be revenue for gardens. (**Recommendations** - Adjust the City site-seeing tours to include community gardens.)
- **Visit Gardens** – (**Recommendations** – Visit and tour community gardens and get to know community gardeners around NYC; Contact NYC Community Garden Coalition; Green Thumb, Green Guerillas, Just Food, Bronx GreenUp, Brooklyn GreenBridge)
- **Community Garden Day** – A day to celebrate community gardens throughout the city. A parade through Manhattan down 5th avenue one selected day in July. (**Recommendations** – Pick a day in July to be “Community Garden Day”, work with New York City Community Garden Coalition.)
- **Some initiatives that happened recently:**
 - FarmAid was held in NYC for the first time in history, which brought rural and urban farms together, recognized community gardens as urban farms.
 - Last week, Governor Eliot Spitzer passed state-wide food policy council.
 - Mayor Bloomberg has appointed Ben Thompson in charge of NYC food policy program.

- NYC Community Garden Coalition worked with NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets to reinstate the State Office of Community Gardens
- Our expectation and hope is that community gardeners will have a larger representation when it comes to food issues in NYC. We hope that the mayor's 2030 plan includes the increase of community gardens, land for urban farms, greenhouses, and rooftop gardens.
- **Restaurants and Bodegas** - Also linking community gardens to restaurants, bodegas, schools. We would like to see community gardens linking up to restaurants so restaurants can participate in growing herbs for kitchens used in kitchen.