



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

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Gale A. Brewer, Borough President

February 10, 2015

Hon. Bill de Blasio
Mayor
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Vicki Been
Commissioner
NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development
100 Gold Street
New York, NY 10038

Dear Mayor de Blasio and Commissioner Been:

In January, HPD issued a Request for Qualification to invite developers to submit their qualifications to development residential projects under the New Infill Homeownership Opportunities Program (NIHOP) and the Neighborhood Construction Program (NCP). Under this RFQ, 18 locations in Manhattan, all of which are in Central and East Harlem, have been identified as sites that the city plans to turn into residential developments.

While I recognize the value of developing vacant and underused parcels and returning them to the city's tax roll, particularly for the development of affordable housing, I am gravely concerned that many of the Manhattan properties identified in the RFQ are currently active community gardens managed by and flourishing under the care of local residents:

- Harlem Grown Greenhouse on W. 134th Street, Lot 1918, Block 51
- Harlem Valley Garden on W. 134th Street, Lot 1919, Block 5
- A garden that appears to be owned and run by Heaven Bound Church of Christ Holy Temple, Inc. on West 133th Street, Lot 1918, Block 16
- Electric Ladybug Community Garden on West 111st Street, Lot 1827, Block 14
- Jackie Robinson Community Garden on Park Avenue, Lot 1771, Blocks 1 and 2
- Pleasant Village Garden on E. 118th Street, Lot 1815, Blocks 5 and 6

These gardens not only offer green spaces to community residents, but some of them are also active sites for collecting food and yard wastes for composting. As the primary sponsor of Local Law 77 of 2013 that established an organic waste collection program among the city's schools and single- and multifamily residential buildings, I am concerned that the redevelopment of active gardens into residential housing will reduce New York City's overall capacity to divert organic waste from the waste stream. This not only detracts from PlaNYC's goal to divert at least 75% of New York City's solid waste from landfill by 2030, it will also add to the already

costly budget of over \$300 million expended annually for the city to truck its waste to out-of-state landfills and waste processing plants.

Active community gardens should not be turned into housing. I urge HPD to take the above listed Manhattan gardens off the RFQ list. These parcels are community assets that should be preserved and cultivated. HPD must not view them as liabilities to be disposed of.

I also urge HPD to approach the disposition of city-owned properties in a comprehensive and transparent manner. I am dismayed at the lack of transparency during the RFQ's site-selection process. Housing and urban agriculture advocacy groups have informed my office that they learned about the RFQ only after it was released and the sites already identified. Inviting community input will generate innovative ideas on residential development without sacrificing a neighborhood's green spaces. One such innovation that my office and Manhattan Community Board 11 have supported is the East Harlem El Barrio Community Land Trust. Community land trusts seek to develop and preserve affordable housing and community space—including gardens—around the needs of individual communities so that improvements made to a neighborhood are both desirable and sustainable. If the NIHOP/NCP sites are conveyed to community land trusts, *both* affordable housing and improved access to local green spaces are likely to result in individual neighborhoods. Other preservation models that include the continued cultivation of green spaces may exist in lieu of HPD's current RFQ approach and should also be considered.

Gardens, greenhouses, and urban farms are invaluable assets to the communities in which they are located and must not be destroyed for the sake of expanding residential development. **The active gardens under HPD's NIHOP and NCP RFQ must be removed** to prevent losses to New York City's neighborhoods. I would be happy to discuss ways to protect our communities' assets with you. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 212-669-8300.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Gale A. Brewer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Gale" being more prominent.

Gale A. Brewer
Manhattan Borough President

Enclosure.

B. List of Sites in the RFQ

= Active garden

BOROUGH	BLOCK	LOT	CD	PHN	Address	Cluster
MN	1827	14	110	237	WEST 111 STREET	Central Harlem (NCP)
MN	1913	52	110	142	WEST 129 STREET	Central Harlem 2 (NIHOP or NCP)
MN	1918	16	110	131	WEST 133 STREET	Central Harlem 2 (NIHOP or NCP)
MN	1918	53	110	130	WEST 134 STREET	Central Harlem 2 (NIHOP or NCP)
MN	1921	49	110	136	WEST 137 STREET	Central Harlem 2 (NIHOP or NCP)
MN	1728	9	110	61	WEST 130 STREET	Central Harlem (NIHOP)
MN	1754	68	111	2	EAST 130 STREET	Central Harlem (NIHOP)
MN	1911	26	110	109	WEST 126 STREET	Central Harlem (NIHOP)
MN	1918	51	110	126	WEST 134 STREET	Central Harlem (NIHOP)
MN	1919	5	110	197	WEST 134 STREET	Central Harlem (NIHOP)
MN	1941	27	110	203	WEST 135 STREET	Central Harlem (NIHOP)
MN	1674	104	111	303	EAST 102 STREET	East Harlem (NCP)
MN	1771	1	111	1761	PARK AVENUE	East Harlem (NCP)
MN	1771	2	111	1763	PARK AVENUE	East Harlem (NCP)
MN	1815	5	111	505	EAST 118 STREET	East Harlem (NCP)
MN	1815	6	111	507	EAST 118 STREET	East Harlem (NCP)
MN	372	11	103	276	EAST 3 STREET	Lower East Side (NCP)
MN	372	49	103	302	EAST 2 STREET	Lower East Side (NCP)
BX	2958	120	206	907	EAST 175 STREET	East Tremont (NCP)
BX	2960	21	206	1900	MARMION AVENUE	East Tremont (NCP)
BX	2365	23	203	881	BROOK AVENUE	Melrose (NIHOP)
BX	2370	143	203	3341	3 AVENUE	Melrose (NIHOP)
BX	2617	20	201	672	ST ANNS AVENUE	Melrose (NIHOP)
BX	2617	70	201	675	EAGLE AVENUE	Melrose (NIHOP)
BX	2620	46	203	901	EAGLE AVENUE	Melrose (NIHOP)
BX	2624	73	201	667	CAULDWELL AVENUE	Melrose (NIHOP)
BX	2667	1	201	840	TINTON AVENUE	Melrose (NIHOP)
BX	2667	2	201	842	TINTON AVENUE	Melrose (NIHOP)
BX	2388	p/o 54	203	14	GOUVERNEUR PLACE	Melrose/Concourse (NCP)
BX	2896	96	203	404	CLAREMONT PARKWAY	Melrose/Concourse (NCP)
BX	2877	278	205	1647	POPHAM AVENUE	Morris Heights/University Heights (NCP)
BX	3195	21	205	30	WEST 182 STREET	Morris Heights/University Heights (NCP)
BX	2748	24	202	1048	FAILE STREET	Morrisania/Claremont Village (NIHOP)
BX	2782	13	204	1316	FINDLAY AVENUE	Morrisania/Claremont Village (NIHOP)
BX	2971	35	203	1325	CHISHOLM STREET	Morrisania/Claremont Village (NIHOP)
BX	2971	35	203	1325	CHISHOLM STREET	Morrisania/Claremont Village (NIHOP)
BX	2971	38	203	1319A	CHISHOLM STREET	Morrisania/Claremont Village (NIHOP)
BX	2971	39	203	1319	CHISHOLM STREET	Morrisania/Claremont Village (NIHOP)