Far Rock Garden

Mission Statement

Far Rock Garden is a thriving urban garden, compost site and welcoming community space at the corner of Nameoke and Augustina, Queens block 15534, lot 70. The site will be a community garden where residents grow healthy produce in raised beds together. We will promote healthy eating and sustainable practices that will benefit the neighborhood, as well as a green, safe space where neighborhood children can play and learn.

From vacant lot to community garden

Identifying the Need

This garden will help eliminate the food deserts currently in the Far Rockaway community. All local supermarkets and Delicatessens (Delis) provide substandard offerings of produce and food to the people in this community from the lower Beaches to Beach 60. The closest supermarket with average to above average produce is located at Beach 70, 3 miles from the core Mott Ave and Central Ave. area; while the next closest supermarket is located in Inwood, Long Island, 1.2 miles away from this same intersection. Currently there are several supermarkets with substandard offerings: Bravo, Compare Foods, Food Dynasty, Keyfood, and other smaller, privately-owned supermarkets. Currently the following is available for food alternatives: multiple Popeye's, McDonald's, multiple Dunkin Donuts, Checkers, an abundance of Chinese Food establishments, Golden Krust, KFC, Little Caesars; all while the single and closest farm is located at Beach 45th Street. In light of the current gentrification efforts currently in place in the Downtown Far Rockaway community, we are organizing to save land for the People's health and wellness.

April 2017
How the Garden Will Be Used

Garden membership will be open to all interested community members. All members will have keys to the garden so it's easily accessible. There will be a mix of private garden beds and community garden beds. Private beds will be assigned first-come, first-serve with bi-annual group check-ins to ensure everybody is using their assigned beds, and transferring them to other gardeners waiting for private beds if they have been absent.

It will host an affordable farmers' market twice a week, once on a weekday and once on a weekend from April to October. Gardeners will harvest rainwater to water crops (in addition to using the fire hydrant). A local Master Composter, graduate of the Queens Botanical Gardens’ NYC Compost Project program will help neighbors transform food scraps into a sustainable, nutrient-rich growing medium for the gardeners using 3-bin and Windrow systems. He will organize a sub-group of neighborhood composters who will take care of the compost systems on a rotation. Community members in conjunction with Queens Botanical Garden will host workshops on environmental stewardship for neighbors and youth on topics including gardening, cooking, rainwater catchment, composting and more.

Transformation of food scraps in action:

STAGE 1: Worm buddies break down food scraps

STAGE 2: Food scraps have been transformed to nutrient rich soil

STAGE 3: Soil becomes medium for growing food -- like mixed lettuce! (photos from successful composting by future community garden member)

April 2017
Garden Design
GreenThumb Garden Registration 2015-2019

Garden Name  For Rockaway Garden

Block 15534 Lot 70 CB 14 Jurisdiction D06

Two members must provide full contact information on the license agreement, including phone numbers, addresses and emails. These primary members phone or email information will be given to potential new members.

* All garden groups must register every year with GreenThumb in order to be eligible for materials and services. License agreements will be renewed every four years.

* Complete all sections of this packet.

* You may either fill out the membership list or attach a printed copy.

* Garden groups must provide GreenThumb with two sets of current keys once they are registered and licensed.

* Please bring your post marked GreenThumb registration letter with you to a registration session in your borough.

GreenThumb: Transforming vacant lots into gardens since 1978
Membership Procedure

Far Rockaway Garden

Garden Name

☐ Call a garden representative.
  Name ___________________________ Phone ___________________________
  Email ___________________________

☑ Come to a garden meeting. ☐ weekly ☐ biweekly ☑ monthly
  When are your meetings?

☑ Pay a membership fee. How much is the fee per year? ___________
  Is there a student or senior discount?

☐ Volunteer first. How many hours must they volunteer? ___________

☐ Sign a work agreement. What must a member agree to?
  Minimum hours of work per month? ___________
  Hosting open hours? ___________
  Maintaining common spaces? ___________
  Attend garden meetings? ___________
  Other? ___________

☑ Is there a waiting list for a garden plot? Yes  How many total plots are there? ___________

☐ Other membership requirements specific to your garden?

☑ Bylaws

We want all GreenThumb gardens to operate to their highest potential. Creating bylaws for your garden group will provide the structure for your community to know exactly what is needed of them so everyone can enjoy a safe, rewarding community garden space. Please submit a copy of your bylaws with this registration packet.

We will work on our bylaws once we have access to the space. We want to include as many people in the process of creating them as possible.
Registered GreenThumb Gardens are required to be open at least TWENTY (20) regularly scheduled hours per week during the season (April 1 - October 31). Gardens are required to post an “Open Hours” sign on the gate. Because the garden MUST be open during the hours posted on your “Open Hours” sign, please limit the number of hours you post on the sign to only the hours per week that you can 100% guarantee to be open. Please specify AM and PM.

### HOURS OPEN

**SAMPLE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONDAY</th>
<th>8 am – 12 noon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TUESDAY</td>
<td>2 pm – 7 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEDNESDAY</td>
<td>10 am – 4 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THURSDAY</td>
<td>2 pm – 7 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRIDAY</td>
<td>9 am – 12 noon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SATURDAY</td>
<td>8 am – 5 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUNDAY</td>
<td>Closed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sample Sign**

Visitors Welcome to
La Casita Verde Community
Garden
Open Hours
Friday 3pm – 5pm  Sat & Sun 10am – 2pm
Or whenever the gate is open, weather permitting

NYC Parks
GreenThumb
Neighborhood View: Farms for Far Rockaway

RESIDENT SAYS PLANNERS SHOULDN'T NEGLECT FOOD JUSTICE WHEN THINKING ABOUT HOW TO REDEVELOP THE NEIGHBORHOOD.

The redevelopment of Far Rockaway could establish ways for residents to grow their own food and create other opportunities to improve access to nutritious food. Or it could worsen existing food-access issues.

BY ALLISON F. JEFFREY

Pause for a moment and consider, “What is the most sacred thing to mankind after breathing”? It’s food (and water of course)! We must eat and drink in order to live. Now consider a people forced to consume unhealthy and dangerous foods. How might this impact their daily lives? How might his impact their education, finances, housing, access to health, access to resources? How might this impact their culture, how they treat each other, how they see themselves, and how they learn? Can this be considered trauma? After all, poverty is a form of trauma.

These questions can and must be applied to the more than 120,000 American citizens residing in the neighborhood known as Far Rockaway. Far Rock, as it’s affectionately called, is isolated from the rest of the five boroughs. Despite being surrounded on most of its sides by water, Far Rockaway is a notorious food desert.

According to the USDA, food deserts “are defined as parts of the country void of fresh fruit, vegetables, and other healthful whole foods, usually found in impoverished areas. This is largely due to a lack of grocery stores, farmers’ markets, and healthy food providers.” According to RockawayRising.org, Far Rockaway, despite its beautiful beaches, “is a neighborhood which has the second highest density of public housing of all five boroughs.”

With 43 percent of its population living at or below the poverty line, Far Rockaway’s food desert is worsened by the copious fast food restaurants, particularly in the Downtown Far Rockaway area. Within a 10-block radius of the Mott Avenue and Beach 20th/Central Avenue intersection there’s a McDonald’s, three Popeyes, a Checkers, three Dunkin Donuts, multiple Crown Fried Chicken establishments, multiple corner bodegas, Chinese restaurants and pizzerias. This food desert is worsened by substandard grocery stores and supermarkets in the neighborhood. The results are clear: Obesity and high-blood pressure are far higher in Far Rock than the rest of the borough and the rate of death from heart disease is 78 percent higher in the Rockaways than it is in Queens County overall.

How can we eliminate this food desert? We can start by empowering the residents with access to resources such as free, publicly owned land where they can grow their own food—food without pesticides and hormones, that’s not downtrodden and depressing in appearance, that’s organic. A community farm is needed in the Downtown Far Rockaway area since it is located more than 30 blocks from the closest community farm at Beach 41st Street.

The publicly owned land at the corner of Augustina Avenue and Nameoke Street is the best solution to this serious food epidemic. The land is currently owned by the Sanitation Department and has been unused for more than a decade. This land can easily be transferred to the Department of Parks and Recreation for maintenance, and access given to the residents of the area for farming, composting, or food co-op development. Instead, the city plans to sell the land for cheap to real estate investors that probably do not live in the area.

As the city moves toward rezoning Far Rockaway, there are many questions to be answered. One of the key ones is, if not through a community farm, how do you planners and elected officials propose to healthily feed approximately 52,000 impoverished Far Rockaway residents, given the poor health statistics and food desert? Other questions include:

How many acres of green space will the proposed rezoning set aside to address food and health needs?

Compared with concerns like housing, parking, recreation and libraries, what level of priority do you place on addressing the Far Rockaway food desert?

Given the environmental damage from Hurricane Sandy, what precautions will you take to reduce the impact this development/revitalization will have on the ecosystem?

Do you think Far Rockaway is a food desert? If so, how do you think it should be addressed? Tell us at zone@citylimits.org.

---

Excited? Worried?
How do you feel about the proposed rezoning of Far Rockaway?
Tell us Today
zone@citylimits.org
844-ZONE-NYC
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>ADDRESS</th>
<th>EMAIL</th>
<th>PHONE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DEADLINE**

**WE SUPPORT A PUBLIC COMMUNITY GREEN SPACE AT QUEENS BLOCK 15534 1OT 70 AT AUGUSTINA**

**WE WANT TO HELP THIS COMMUNITY OF VOLUNTEERS IN FROCKAWAY**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Address (use cross-streets only)</th>
<th>Phone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joe</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Joe@gmail.com">Joe@gmail.com</a></td>
<td>123 Main St, Rockaway, NJ 07726</td>
<td>555-1234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Jane@doe.com">Jane@doe.com</a></td>
<td>456 Oak Ave, Rockaway, NJ 07726</td>
<td>555-5678</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Mike@example.com">Mike@example.com</a></td>
<td>789 Cherry Rd, Rockaway, NJ 07726</td>
<td>555-9876</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note that some names and addresses are placeholders for demonstration purposes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>PHONE</th>
<th>EMAIL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Smith</td>
<td>123-456-7890</td>
<td><a href="mailto:johnsmith@email.com">johnsmith@email.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane Doe</td>
<td>098-765-4321</td>
<td><a href="mailto:janedoe@email.com">janedoe@email.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Johnson</td>
<td>111-222-3333</td>
<td><a href="mailto:michaeljohn@email.com">michaeljohn@email.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily Davis</td>
<td>444-555-6666</td>
<td><a href="mailto:emilydavis@email.com">emilydavis@email.com</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Address:**
321 Maple Street, New York, NY 10001

**Supporting Information:**
Some way to help this campaign or volunteer in.

**Website:**
www.ourway.com/forrockaway

**Contact:**
Sign online at www.ourway.com/forrockaway
Mayor's Office of Sustainability,

Green Space for Downtown Far Rockaway

Allison Jeffrey Far Rockaway, NY

104
Supporters

We, the Community Members of Far Rockaway want Queens Block 15534, Lot 70 to remain public. To share this petition, here’s a shortened URL:

www.tinyurl.com/farrockgarden

As part of the current redevelopment plans for Downtown Far Rockaway, the City is requesting approval to dispose (sell or give away) the City-owned lot at Queens Block 15534, Lot 70. This lot is currently not being used and is owned by DSNY, the Sanitation department. The lot is zoned for 1 and 2 family homes; so, the City is seeking approval to sell it to a private developer so that more houses can be built. HOWEVER, We, the residents of Downtown Far Rockaway, want to keep this land public so
that the Community can benefit from a green space.

We want the City to remove the disposition of Queens Block 15534, Lot 70 from the current DOWNTOWN FAR ROCKAWAY REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT DRAFT SCOPE OF WORK FOR AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT CEQR NO. 16DME010Q document found here:

http://livinglotsnyc.org/media/files/16DME010Q_Draft_Scope_Of_Work_08192016_1.pdf under sub-heading DISPOSITION OF CITY-OWNED PROPERTY


This 14,000 square feet of land can be best served by creating a public-use space such as a community garden and compost. Far Rockaway is a notorious food desert. The substandard local groery stores and supermarkets have lackluster produce offerings. The more than 20 fast food restaurants also do not serve the community’s best interest. The Downtown Far Rockaway area has a significant empowered population - 43% of the families make $30,000 or less per year. A community garden would offer all residents a healthy and organic food resource. A community garden would be a vested asset to community youth who can learn how to grow their own food. Community schools can also participate in said green space.

Once this publicly owned land is transferred to private hands, the people can never benefit from it again. We thank you for your continued support.

This petition was delivered to:

- Mayor’s Office of Sustainability, Esther Brunner

Read the letter

Letter to
Mayor’s Office of Sustainability, Esther Brunner

Green Space for Downtown Far Rockaway

organic farming
compost
organic gardening
green space
public lands

Allison Jeffrey started this petition with a single signature, and now has 104 supporters. Start a petition today to change something you care about.

Start a petition

Updates

1. 6 months ago
   100 supporters
2. 7 months ago
   Petition update
September 26, 2015

Ms. Esther Brunner
Mayor’s Office Of Sustainability
253 Broadway – 7th Floor
New York, NY 10007

Re: Comment on Downtown Rockaway Redevelopment Plan (CEQR NO. 16DME010Q)
Draft Scope of Work for EIS – Remove the disposition of Queens block 15534, lot 70

Ms. Brunner,

I am writing on behalf of NYC Mechanical Gardens Bike Coop, a collectively-run nonprofit dedicated to sharing bicycle maintenance and traffic-navigating skills with New Yorkers of all income levels, located in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. We request that Queens block 15534, lot 70 be removed from the Downtown Rockaway Redevelopment Plan prior to determining the final scope of work for the Environmental Impact Study.

We understand that on page 15 of the Draft Plan, the lease or sale to a private developer is described for "new as-of-right residential uses pursuant to existing R3X zoning." R3X zoning allows for the construction of single and two-family detached homes. The current zoning would allow approximately 8-10 apartments to be built on the site. The architects’ rendering in the draft does not include the new buildings on this lot. Neither the inclusion nor the disposition of this City-owned lot is in keeping with the strategy of the Redevelopment Plan. The lot is outside the targeted area and the development proposed for this site does not fit with the proposed building envelope.1

But a much more significant issue is that this land is public land. We believe that the City should not transfer the land to a private developer to create as many as ten new suburban-style market-rate housing units. Many more New Yorkers will benefit if the City keeps the site public and allows it to be developed for the use of the neighborhood by community leaders and local residents.

1 Figures in the Draft Scope do not actually illustrate the proposed disposition. Figure 13 shows the building envelope of a structure that used to be on the site but was demolished by DSNY last year. In Figure 14, the lot is shown without structures at all.
Public land is rare and precious in New York City. On this issue, NYC Mechanical Gardens stands in solidarity with 596 Acres, which has facilitated the transformation of over three dozen vacant lots like lot 70 into community-stewarded open spaces throughout the five boroughs.

These oases provide key social infrastructure for the development of strong communities. They become places for people get to know their neighbors, share skills, and build resiliency. On these once-vacant lots, New Yorkers grow healthy food, teach science to school kids; divert water from our over-burdened sewers; remove tons of waste from landfill by redirecting organics into soil production via composting; and provide space for cultural activities – such as community-based bicycle cooperatives.

The Rockaway community will only get the opportunity to determine the best possible use of this public asset if this lot is not privately developed.

NYC Mechanical Gardens urges you to remove the disposition of Queens block 15534, lot 70 from the Draft Scope of Scope of work for the Downtown Rockaway Redevelopment Plan so that the redevelopment of the vacant private properties in the area can proceed along with community planning for the transformation of this public lot into a resource.

NYC Mechanical Gardens stands with 596 Acres and the residents of Downtown Rockaway to work toward a more productive and community-minded use of the public land at Queens block 15534, lot 70.

Collectively, we thank you your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,
Alexis Danzig,
on behalf of the NYC Mechanical Gardens Bike Coop
September 26, 2015

Esther Brunner
Mayor's Office Of Sustainability
253 Broadway – 7th Floor
New York, NY 10007

Re: Comment on Downtown Rockaway Redevelopment Plan (CEQR NO. 16DME010Q) Draft Scope of Work for EIS – Remove the disposition of Queens block 15534, lot 70

Ms. Brunner,

I am writing to request that Queens block 15534, lot 70 be removed from the Downtown Rockaway Redevelopment Plan prior to determining the final scope of work for the Environmental Impact Study. The Draft Plan, on page 15, describes its lease or sale to a private developer for "new as-of-right residential uses pursuant to existing R3X zoning." More importantly: this land is public land. There is no reason at all for the City to transfer it to a private developer to create 10 new suburban-style market-rate housing units. A lot more people will benefit if the City keeps the site and allows it to be developed for public use by resident leaders.

Our organization is based on the Lower East Side, where gardens and open space are vital to community cohesiveness. Gardens Rising is a GOSR-funded program that is increasing stormwater retention and value to the city is of a type that will be lost in the Rockaways if Queens block 15534, lot 70 is developed as residences.

The parcel should be a key asset in what will become a dense neighborhood as planned. It can be transferred to the NYC Parks Department for use as a GreenThumb garden or for the creation of a new Downtown Rockaway Park or Playground. Not only will it supply key social infrastructure for the development of resilient communities, it will divert water from our overburdened sewers, remove tons of waste from landfill by redirecting organics into soil production via composting and provide space for cultural activities.

I urge you to remove the disposition of Queens block 15534, lot 70 from the Draft Scope of work for the Downtown Rockaway Redevelopment Plan so that the redevelopment of the vacant private properties in the area can proceed in parallel with community planning for the transformation of this public lot into a resource.

Sincerely,

Wendy Brawer
Founding Director