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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 over-burdened 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 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