Dear Mayor de Blasio,

It will come as no surprise to you that community gardens are essential components of a vibrant and healthy city. Our group, The Gardeners of Hooper Street Park, is writing to you today in hopes of garnering support of our proposed community garden, the development of which has recently been stalled.

**The Space**
There is currently an empty, City-owned lot on the Southside of Williamsburg that has the potential to become a neighborhood garden. At the moment, it is full of trash, weeds, and rodents. However, we, a group of concerned citizens, believe it has the capacity to serve as a safe, green, open space for our community.

- Address: 375 South 5th Street Brooklyn, NY 11211
- Cross street: Hooper
- Block: 02450
- Lot: 00028

**Citizens Coming Together**
In Spring 2012, our group first contacted 596 Acres, New York City’s Community Land Access Advocacy Organization, in hopes of getting access to this lot. Since December of 2013, our group has grown and has been privileged enough to obtain the full support of Community Board 1 and the parks subcommittee.

Turning this unofficial dumping ground into a space that will appeal to all segments of the population is thrilling...and we aren’t the only ones who think so! St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, El Puente, Nuestros Niños Preschool, Awesome Bunnies Childcare Center, and Los Sures have all come out in support of our efforts.

**The Garden Policy of the HPD**
Since 2011, as the final use for vacant, city-owned sites are being determined, it has been standard practice for the Housing Preservation Development (HPD) to issue interim use licenses to community groups seeking to beautify their neighborhoods.

Some of these sites have been developed as extremely successful open community spaces and have subsequently been transferred to the Parks Department for permanent preservation. Others sites have ceased to operate when it has been determined that the construction of new buildings would better serve the community’s needs.
A Surprising Reversal
Mr. Mayor, we are reaching out to you directly because Rasheed Hislop, Deputy Director of Green Thumb, informed us that no more interim use licenses will be issued for lots in HPD’s inventory. This new policy is a sudden reversal of a practice that has been working well to transform neglected land into needed open space. The implementation of this directive will prevent the creation of Hooper Street Park that our community has been organizing to create for over a year.

We urge your office to retain the successful policy of allowing temporary gardens and community open spaces on vacant public land. Specifically, we believe that every opportunity should be reviewed individually and that land should be made available for community use until a final disposition becomes a reality.

Included is our group’s supporting documentation expressing the neighborhood support and our plans for the park. We look forward to hearing how you can help us make this public space a reality for the South Williamsburg community.

Sincerely,
Raina Trider
Tiffany Frances
Beverly Bryan
Robert Atterbury

Attachment 1: Group Mission Statement
Attachment 2: Drawing of the Park Plans
Attachment 3: Member Contact List
Attachment 4: Letter of Support from Brooklyn Community Board 1
Attachment 5: Letter of Support from El Puente
Attachment 6: Letter of Support from Los Sures
Attachment 7: Letter of Support from Nuestros Niños Preschool
Attachment 8: Letter of Support from St. Paul’s Lutheran Church
Attachment 9: Letter of Support from Awesome Bunnies Childcare Center