ABOUT THE PROCESS:
The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) owns a large lot along Kent and Myrtle Avenues made up of three parcels (A, B, and C). Parcel A is vital for DEP because it provides them access to a water tunnel. Parcel B cannot be built on, but can be released by DEP and used for passive surface activities, such as a garden. Parcel C, which has 102’ of frontage on Myrtle Ave with a commercial overlay, can be built on. DEP has indicated in prior meetings that they plan to dispose of Parcel C for the construction of affordable housing. To this end, IMPACCT Brooklyn in partnership with Architecture in Formation New York (AFNY) aims to establish a community-supported affordable housing development with mixed-income with commercial community facility space in addition to a permanent garden in Parcel B and C. IMPACCT envisions re-purposing parcel C into a mixed-use housing and community facility building and establishing parcel B into a permanent garden. IMPACCT is working with Hester Street Collaborative (HSC) to design and execute a community consensus and design visioning process with stakeholders to arrive at a unified vision for the future of the lot.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT:
In March of 2012, there was a meeting between DEP Assistant Commissioner, then Council member Leticia James, the Community Board 3 Chairperson, representatives from the Brooklyn Borough President, the Mayor’s Office, IMPACCT (then PACC), the Pratt Center, and several residents at the Brooklyn Community Foundation. Following the convening, DEP agreed to make the site available for community gardening until it could be developed into affordable housing. On July 20th, 2012, IMPACCT (then PACC) entered into a license agreement with NYC DEP to use parcel C of the site as a temporary community garden. Myrtle Village Green, a 19,380 square feet volunteer-ran community garden has used parcel C since then.

CHARRETTE WITH GARDENERS:
On Sunday October 2, 2016, IMPACCT and HSC hosted a charrette with approximately 22 adult gardeners and several youth gardeners. Deborah Howard, Executive Director of IMPACCT, provided historical context and shared IMPACCT’s vision for the site’s future. Following the welcome, all gardeners introduced themselves and shared their concerns, fears, and aspirations regarding change in their current garden. Some gardeners expressed their wariness of housing development in a lot that has provided their community access to green space, community building, and locally grown food. Others provided additional historical context of the space, and expressed mistrust in yet another process to develop the previously empty DEP lot. After all gardeners had an opportunity to share their frustrations, and ask questions of IMPACCT, HSC introduced the goals of the visioning activities and divided the gardeners into three groups.

Although there was clear tension at the beginning of the session, the conversations about the current use of the temporary garden and their hopes for a new permanent garden were ultimately positive. The following pages summarizes the contributions from gardeners who participated in the charrette activities.
DIAGRAM OF PARCELS FROM DEP’S PERSPECTIVE IN 2012:

DEP plans to retain the 220' x 97' area on Kent Avenue (A) with several limitations:

1. 24/7 access to the shaft hatches and equipment

2. Drivable surface with no permanent structures

3. Restrictions on trees or large plantings are also restricted within 20' of Area A due to concerns with fertilizer use

Parcel A: Site will become available with restrictions when DEP activates the tunnel in 2024

Parcel B: DEP will review availability after roof construction in 2012; DEP will use this parcel again starting in 2020 for staging before the tunnel is activated

Parcel C: Available now for alternate use
The charrette aimed to identify: the current uses of the garden and the desired physical components or elements they would like to see in a new garden space, as well as concerns that could be addressed in a new site.

**GARDEN USES:**
This activity was divided into three sections that asked gardeners:
- Weekly time spent at the garden
- Activities they partake at the garden
- Reasons they love the garden

**WEEKLY TIME SPENT**

- **1-3 HRS**: 10 gardeners indicated they spent 1-3 hours at the garden,
- **7+ HRS**: 8 spend more than 7 hours, and 5 spend 3-7 hours at the garden.

**CURRENT ACTIVITIES**
*Gardeners placed a dot next to the activities they do at the garden.*

- Growing plants + food: 22
- Build community: 20
- Open space access: 12
Gardeners were also asked to talk about what other activities they do in the garden.

**LEARNING**
- Place to learn and to teach one another
- Place for astronomy lessons and science experiments
- Carbon bank fertility, lead soil remediation

**NATURE AND OPEN SPACE**
- Observe pigeon coup next door
- Place to observe bird flight patterns and other wild life
- Place to relax and take mental health breaks
- Place for digging, playing, and for being in the dirt

**COMMUNITY BUILDING**
- Community beds draw people in and it results in a shared labor
- Place for conversations and advice
- Kids become friends because they use the garden as a space to play
- Neighbors meet each other and build relationships
- Gardeners work together to beautify community, such as getting a trash bin and other beautification efforts
- Place to gather and work together to feed families
As part of the activity on uses of the garden, gardeners were asked to talk about the reasons they love the garden.

**I love the garden because...**

**COMMUNITY**
- Members are very intentional and affirmative about making the garden a very open, welcoming space for all.
- Open facade is inviting, and accessible to all. Close to street, and open gate policy ($10 key fee is all it takes to join).
- It is culturally and ethnically diverse.
- It promotes building community bridges and overcoming differences.
- Older community residents (some who don’t garden) can come and sit in a beautiful space.

**PLAY TIME**
- We get a place to pretend that we are grown-ups.
- We play together- it’s like home (Nina age 8).
- It is a place where children grow and learn.
- Space provides essential unstructured green space for children to play.

**FOOD ACCESS**
- I am inspired by the amount of food grown to feed families and the savings it creates.
- It provides enough jobs for everyone, and we understand and celebrate that everyone is capable.
- It provides space to grow food that we can eat; we are able to grow a lot in a small space.

**OPEN SPACE**
- It provides us with green space that is a bit cooler in the summer (cooling center).
- I live in a concrete jungle, and this is the only green space I have.
- People are able to connect with nature.

**STRUCTURE**
- There is transparent governance and consensus based decision-making.
- There is the reusing of resources, partnering with organizations and being resourceful (i.e. finding soil on craigslist).
- We can have a direct impact on something, such as reducing waste through composting.
NEW GARDEN ASPIRATIONS
To inform future development, the gardeners were asked to identify what they would like to see, do and feel in a new garden space. This activity also provided an opportunity for gardeners to highlight the concerns they have about the current garden that may be addressed in a new space.

The gardeners answered the following questions:
• What activities do you want to be able to do?
• What elements would you like to see in the garden (i.e. greenhouse)?
• What kind of look and feel would you like?
• What concerns do you have about the current garden space?

ACTIVITIES
Gardeners were given options about what types of activities they would like to see in a potential new garden. Gardeners were generally in support of all options, and had additional suggestions.

**Garden**
- Fruit trees

**Organize**
- Roofed meeting and educational space
- Shed for storage

**Socialize**
- Communication strategies
- Structured sharing of harvest with neighborhood

**Exercise**
- Jungle gym and playground infrastructure for children
- Walking paths for recreation

**Relax**
- Indoor space for year-round meetings

**What else?**
- Chicken coup
- Bee hive box
- BBQ and cooking options
Gardeners were given options about what types of physical elements they would like to see in a potential new garden. Gardeners were generally in support of all options, and had few additional suggestions and comments.

**Community Beds**
- We need more shared harvest

**Vertical Garden**
- Could be beautiful, but these are not suitable for Bangladeshi vegetables

**Composting**
- Our current composting needs expansion

**Mural**
- Children gardeners could help to paint a mural

**Shade Structure**
- We need more shade

**Greenhouse**
- We used to have one, but it did not work out.

**Film Screen**
- There should be regular Hindi film screenings

**Benches and Tables**
- These should be separable and movable

**What else?**
- Bathroom
-Permanent electricity and water source
- Classroom space
- Solar generator
-Agreeable to kaboom playground and a recipe sharing kitchen space
LOOK & FEEL
Gardeners were given options about what type of design style they would like to see in a potential new garden. Gardeners overwhelmingly chose a *home-made with a rustic feel* out of the following options:

- Magical
- Rustic
- Modern
- Home-made

These are images used to exemplify gardens with a home-made look & feel.
GARDEN CONCERNS
Gardeners were given options about current concerns they faced in the current garden that could be addressed in a potential new garden.

Safety
• Important, but also important to have a welcoming feel

Lighting
• This would be nice, but it is not needed

Public Access
• Very important to have visibility from the street
• There is a clash between safety and access because gardeners have experienced harvest theft

Other?
• Mosquito control
• Need to remove residue infrastructure (i.e. wires on the walls)
• Bangladeshi families do not have individual/assigned beds yet, so the space where they share beds is not getting good water pressure