



# FROM THE GROUND UP II

A SUPPLEMENTAL  
PETITION  
TO PROTECT  
NEW YORK CITY'S  
COMMUNITY  
GARDENS

Illustration by Claire Huang

Revised September 2022

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents	1
Contributors	2
Petitioners	3
Introduction	4
Requested Actions	10
Community Garden Profiles	
<b>Drew Community Garden Profile - The Bronx</b>	12
<b>Garden of Eden Profile - The Bronx</b>	13
<b>721 Decatur Community Garden Profile - Brooklyn</b>	14
<b>Java Street Community Garden Profile - Brooklyn</b>	15
<b>Walt L. Shamel Community Garden Profile - Brooklyn</b>	16
<b>Dorothy K. McGowan Memorial Garden Profile - Manhattan</b>	17
<b>LaGuardia Corner Gardens Profile - Manhattan</b>	18
<b>Lydia's Magic Garden Profile - Manhattan</b>	19
<b>Oasis Community Garden Profile - Manhattan</b>	20
<b>Riverside-Inwood Neighborhood Garden Profile - Manhattan</b>	21
Resources	22
Appendix	24
Endnotes	34



**Garden of Eden.** Photo by Sorangel Liriano

# CONTRIBUTORS

## EARTHJUSTICE / NYCCGC

Kara Goad  
Sorangel Liriano  
Raymond Figueroa, Jr.

Alexis Andiman  
Matt Ellis-Ramírez  
Mustafa Saifuddin  
Nydia Gutierrez  
Peter Lehner

## GARDENERS

Ali Malone  
Alicia Williamson  
Barbara Cahn  
Brian Henderson  
Ellen Reznick  
Gail D. Johnson  
Gary DiPasquale  
Ivette Vargas  
John Reddick  
Julio Figueroa  
Katherine O'Sullivan

Kimberly Brown  
Macarry Pobanz  
Mariano Figueroa  
Petra Zanki  
Sara Jones  
Timothy Brown  
Zachary Schulman

## ADDITIONAL THANKS TO:

Chabeli Rodríguez



Lydia's Magic Garden. Photo by Sorangel Liriano

## PETITIONERS

490 Farmers  
350Brooklyn  
350NYC  
Banana Kelly Community Improvement Association  
BK ROT  
Brighter Green  
Bronx Climate Justice North  
Bronx Culture Collective  
Bronx Health REACH  
Brooklyn Queens Land Trust (BQLT)  
Brownsville Community Culinary Center  
Capital Roots  
City Lore  
Community Food Advocates  
Concrete Safaris  
Cooperative Economics Alliance of New York City  
(CEANYC)  
CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute  
Design Trust for Public Space  
DIVAS for Social Justice  
Dutchess Outreach  
Earth Celebrations  
Earthjustice  
East New York Farms!  
El Puente  
El Sol Brillante  
Food Chain Workers Alliance  
GOH Productions  
Grassroots Gardens of Western New York  
Green Guerillas  
GreenLatinos  
Groundwork Buffalo  
Ithaca Community Gardens, Inc.  
Just Food  
Justice For Families  
Latino Outdoors  
Laurie M. Tisch Center for Food, Education & Policy,  
Teachers College, Columbia University  
Lenox Hill Neighborhood House  
Lower East Side Ecology Center  
LUNGS (Loisaida United Neighborhood Gardens)  
Manhattan Land Trust (MLT)  
Micro Food Hub  
Natural Areas Conservancy  
Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)  
New York City Audubon  
New York City Community Garden Coalition  
New York City Environmental Justice Alliance (NYC- EJA)  
New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (NYLPI)  
North Bronx Racial Justice  
OSS Project  
People's Climate Movement - New York  
Project Harmony, Inc.  
Samuel's Food Gardens  
Scenic Hudson  
Schaghticoke First Nations  
Small Axe Peppers  
Sunrise NYC  
The Brotherhood Sister Sol  
The Brownsville Partnership, Inc.  
The Climate Reality Project NYC  
The Land and Sea Institute  
The Nature Conservancy  
The Trust for Public Land  
Tribal Link Foundation  
Two Boots  
United Confederation of Taino People  
UPROSE  
WE ACT for Environmental Justice  
WeRadiate  
We Stay/Nos Quedamos, CDC  
WhyHunger  
World Animal Protection



## INTRODUCTION

Oasis Community Garden.  
Photo by Sorangel Liriano

In the months since Earthjustice, the New York City Community Garden Coalition (NYCCGC), and a broad network of additional organizations submitted *From the Ground Up: A Petition to Protect New York City’s Community Gardens*,<sup>1</sup> we continued to identify community gardens that satisfy the criteria for designation as Critical Environmental Areas (CEAs) under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA).<sup>2</sup> Our ongoing collaboration with gardeners across the City has strengthened our belief that all community gardens on City-owned land meet the criteria for CEA designation. Accordingly, the organizations listed below (“Petitioners”) are pleased to submit *From the Ground Up II: A Supplemental Petition to Protect New York City’s Community Gardens*. This supplement expressly seeks CEA designation for the ten community gardens featured on the following pages, and it renews the requests in our original petition.

Since the submission of the original petition, the importance of preserving community gardens has become all the more clear. As explained in more detail below, updated data on New Yorkers’ unequal access to parks have accentuated the importance of achieving open space equity in underserved communities. Continued food insecurity resulting from—and predating—the COVID-19 pandemic has emphasized the necessity of expanding access to healthful and affordable food. Increasingly large rent burdens have intensified New Yorkers’ need to defray food costs. Multiple record rainfall events have underscored the urgent need for equitable resiliency against flooding. And new research showing that communities of color experience significantly higher temperatures than predominately white communities has made clear that the City must do more to protect all New Yorkers against extreme heat.

As community-cultivated hubs of resilience, New York City’s community gardens help meet these needs. Indeed, as Mayor Adams has recognized, community gardens provide “educational, therapeutic, self-governed space that greens our city, increases community

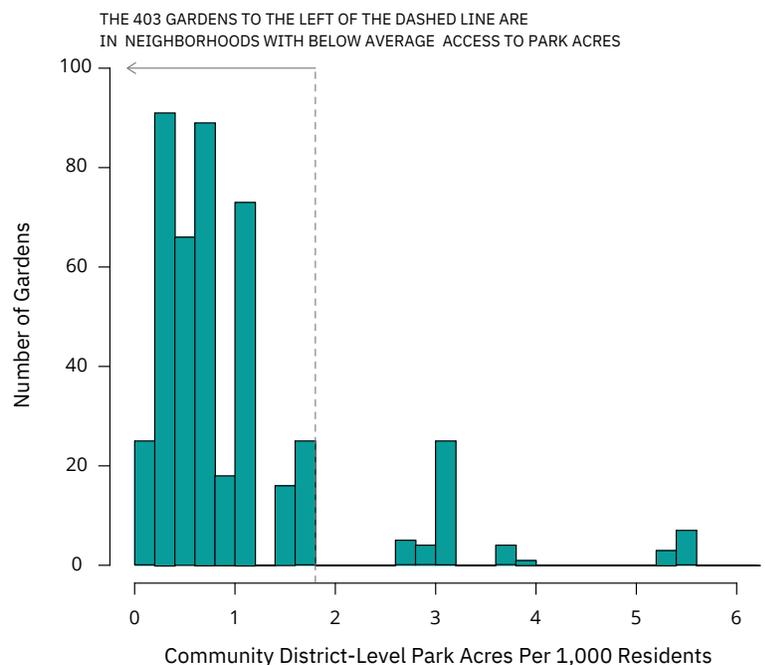
organization and food sovereignty, and diminishes [social] divides.”<sup>3</sup> Similarly, U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack recently acknowledged that “[t]he simple act of planting a garden can have big impacts—from building a more diversified and resilient local food system to empowering communities to come together around healthy food access, climate change, and equity.”<sup>4</sup> Yet, despite their widely recognized health benefits, natural settings, agricultural and social value, and ecological importance, community gardens have little protection, and a number of gardens are currently threatened by development projects.

**Updated data make clear that most community gardens are located in communities where residents lack easy access to public parks; as a result, community gardens fill the role of parks in those communities.** On average, community board districts in New York City have 1.8 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents.<sup>5</sup> However, 89 percent of the 453 community gardens on City-owned land in these boroughs are located in community districts that fall below this average.<sup>6</sup> In addition, 88 percent of community gardens highlighted in the November 2020 petition and 70 percent of gardens in this supplement are in districts with no more than 0.7 park acres per 1,000 residents—that is, less than half the average across community board districts.

As explained in our November 2020 petition and the garden profiles that follow, community gardens often fill the role of public parks. For example, community gardens offer natural spaces where people can gather, recreate, and enjoy a respite from urban life—benefits that were particularly crucial during the height of the pandemic and remain important today. Beyond filling the role of public parks, community gardens offer special value because they represent community-led reclamation projects; they are flexible, functional natural spaces—imagined, designed, and maintained *from the ground up* to address the intersecting issues of environmental justice, food justice, economic justice, and climate justice.

Although community gardens fill the role of public parks and more, they do not receive the level of legal protection that parks receive. For example, federal law establishes a high bar for using parkland for certain highway projects,<sup>7</sup> and New York law requires approval by the state legislature before parkland can be alienated.<sup>8</sup> Public parks receive these protections because, without protections, it would be easy to overlook the benefits parks offer and instead view them as vacant land that is ripe for other uses.<sup>9</sup> Like parks, community gardens offer many benefits and face threats from competing uses. Therefore, community gardens also merit heightened legal protection, even if they do not receive the same protection afforded to public parks.

**Figure 1: Most of New York City’s community gardens are in areas underserved by parks. The graph shows the number of community gardens in community districts ranked by park acres per 1,000 residents.**  
 Credit: Mustafa Saifuddin/  
 Sources: GreenThumb/ New Yorkers for Parks



**Over the past year, community gardens have continued to play an important role in addressing food insecurity in New York City.** As City leaders acknowledged in Food Forward NYC, a ten-year food policy plan, the pandemic “cast a glaring light on the fragility of our food system.”<sup>10</sup> For example, according to a recent study by the NYU Center for the Study of Asian American Health, during the pandemic, food insecurity was the number-one concern for Asian American New Yorkers, who have experienced economic instability and heightened discrimination.<sup>11</sup> Even as the City reopens, people working in food banks report that demand for food remains high,<sup>12</sup> and rising food prices caused by supply chain disruptions and inflation are worsening food insecurity in the City. These high food prices disproportionately burden historically marginalized communities<sup>13</sup> and vulnerable populations, including children. A recent survey by City Harvest of food bank users with children showed that 88 percent of respondents expected that rising food costs will force them to rely on food pantries more often.<sup>14</sup>

The City’s community gardens increase community members’ access to healthful, affordable, and culturally appropriate food, while honoring gardeners’ sense of human dignity. For example, at **Dorothy K. McGowan Memorial Garden** in Washington Heights, gardeners run a community food delivery program that provides fresh, nutrient-dense food to over twenty neighbors in need. **And, in addition to addressing food insecurity, food production at community gardens also helps alleviate rent burden.** Community gardens are concentrated in areas where households are severely rent burdened.<sup>15</sup> Many of these households suffer from food insecurity as a result.<sup>16</sup> As the pandemic has intensified rent burdens and evictions, some New Yorkers have been forced to choose between being homeless or going hungry.<sup>17</sup> Community gardens help address this crisis, as growing food in a community garden allows gardeners to access nutritious, healthful food that would otherwise be prohibitively expensive. The ability to defray food costs, in turn, allows gardeners to put more money toward rent. As Raymond Figueroa, Jr. of the NYCCGC explains, “This is an affordable housing strategy, growing your own food. It allows folks who are rent-burdened, and by extension food insecure, to manage that very unwieldy household economic situation.”<sup>18</sup>

**The greenspace and sustainable green infrastructure in community gardens support equitable resiliency against flooding.** In a span of just ten days in August and September 2021, New York City experienced two separate record-breaking rainfall events.<sup>19</sup> Because the City’s storm-sewer system could not handle this amount of precipitation, rainwater backed up into the streets and caused deadly flooding.<sup>20</sup> As The New York Times explained, “[t]he pattern of damage reflects the relationship between climate exposure and racial inequality: impacts were more apparent in low-income communities of color, which, because of historic inequalities, are more prone to flooding, receive less maintenance from city services, and frequently experience lax housing code enforcement.”<sup>21</sup>

**Dorothy K. McGowan Memorial Garden.**  
*Photo by Sorangel Liriano*





**Java Street  
Community Garden.**  
*Photo by Sorangel Liriano*

Driven by climate change, heavy rainfall events are likely to become more common.<sup>22</sup> To guard against future flooding, experts recommend increasing greenspace—especially permeable surfaces, trees, and vegetation—which will help to absorb excess rainwater.<sup>23</sup>

Over the past decade, the New York City Department of Environmental Protection has spent tens of millions of dollars to expand green infrastructure in the city. Preserving existing community gardens, which already support resiliency against flooding in under-resourced communities, is a necessary, impactful, and cost-effective step toward satisfying this recommendation in an equitable way. As a gardener at **Walt L. Shamel Community Garden** in Brooklyn explains, “by harvesting rainwater, especially when there is a larger rain event, we are diverting that water from the sewer system,” thus reducing the risk of flooding.

**The trees and vegetation in community gardens mitigate extreme heat, which, new research confirms, disproportionately harms communities of color.** On a day in August 2021, The New York Times found that the temperature was 115 degrees on First Avenue in East Harlem and 119 degrees on East 138th Street in the South Bronx, two areas where residents are predominately people of color, while it was only 84 degrees on West 94th Street near Central Park, where residents are predominately white.<sup>24</sup> As a result of disparities like these, African Americans in the City are twice as likely to die from heat exposure as white New Yorkers.<sup>25</sup> Not only does new research show that extreme heat disproportionately burdens communities of color, but it also demonstrates that high temperatures raise the risk of mental health crises.<sup>26</sup>

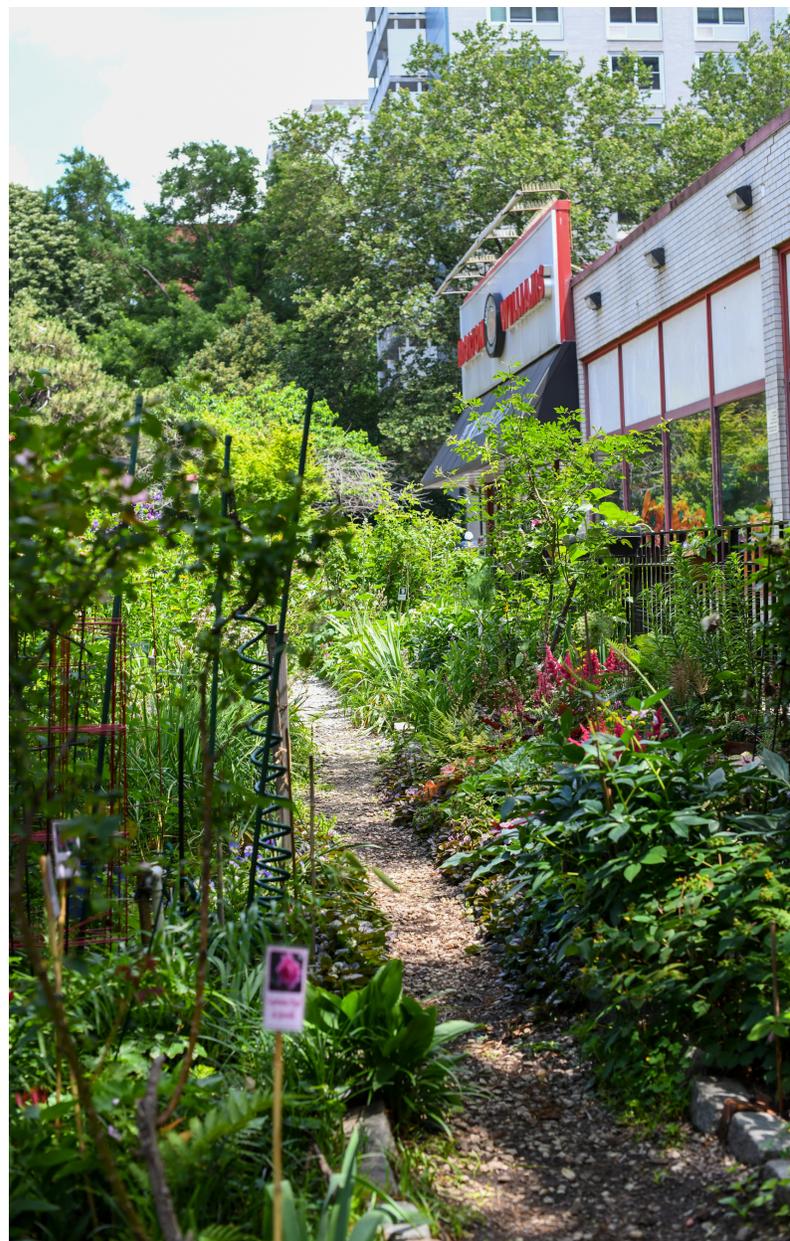
Acknowledging the danger that extreme heat poses to communities, in September 2021, the Biden Administration launched an initiative that encourages “using urban tree, forest, and greening projects to reduce extreme temperatures and heat exposure.”<sup>27</sup> The City’s Borough Presidents have also recognized the important role trees play in reducing heat exposure and improving climate resiliency.<sup>28</sup> Preserving existing tree cover is an important tool to achieve these goals. As one researcher explains, “Preventing tree loss and providing incentives for

planting and maintaining trees in residential areas may be as important as new planting.”<sup>29</sup> Protecting community gardens will ensure that their lush trees and vegetation continue to offer a respite from extreme heat in under-resourced communities across New York City. As a gardener at **Oasis Community Garden** in Hell’s Kitchen shares, “You walk by the garden, and you can feel the coolness from the garden on the sidewalk.”

**Notwithstanding the many benefits they provide, New York City’s community gardens continue to face threats from development.**<sup>30</sup> Later this year, developers plan to begin construction on a lot at **Pleasant Village Community Garden** in East Harlem, which is currently home to a children’s garden that features kid-friendly chickens and an age-appropriate composting bin.<sup>31</sup> In Greenwich Village, New York University’s multiyear plans to build on a lot neighboring **LaGuardia Corner Gardens** include closing the garden for several years and using the garden lot to store construction vehicles and equipment. Gardeners fear that when the lot is no longer needed for storage, they will not be able to restore it as a flower garden, as the new building will leave the lot in shadow.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, a gardener at **Dorothy K. McGowan Memorial Garden** in Washington Heights reports that potential development on lots next to the garden threatens to leave the garden in shadow, preventing gardeners from growing many of the plants currently in the garden. And in October 2021, **Elizabeth Street Garden** in SoHo received an eviction notice from the City, which plans to build affordable housing and commercial space on the garden lot.<sup>33</sup> Garden supporters argue that the City’s environmental review of the development failed to consider the unique characteristics of the garden.<sup>34</sup>

Designating community gardens as CEAs will help to ensure that when a development project may threaten a garden, decision-makers fully consider the impact of the project on the garden’s protected social, cultural, environmental, and ecological characteristics, which correlate to benefits for the local community and the City at large. If the project will impair those characteristics, it likely will require an environmental review that allows gardeners and community members to weigh in before the project is approved. In this way, CEA designation supports an equitable and inclusive decision-making process and it ensures that there is careful consideration before development projects are sited on community gardens, which are often some of the few natural spaces in areas already underserved by public greenspace.

**LaGuardia Corner Gardens.**  
*Photo by Sorangel Liriano*



Gardeners at **Drew Community Garden** in the Bronx have seen first-hand the importance of including a garden’s characteristics and community input in decision-making. When decision-makers were considering using the garden lot for other purposes, gardeners met with the decision-makers at the garden to show them its unique characteristics and explain how those characteristics benefit the community. At least one gardener believes that learning about the garden and hearing from gardeners helped the decision-makers fully understand the benefits the garden offers to the community. Ultimately, conversations between gardeners and decision-makers resulted in the preservation of the garden. To facilitate the preservation of all community gardens on City-owned land, we urge you to grant the requests set out below without delay.



LaGuardia Corner Gardens. Photo by Sorangel Liriano

# REQUESTED ACTIONS

To ensure that New York City’s community gardens endure for years to come, Petitioners make the following three requests.

**First,** Petitioners request that the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), the Department of Education (DOE), and the Department of Transportation (DOT) designate the community gardens named in the petition and supplement as CEAs under the SEQRA within six months following the submission of this supplement, or by December 14, 2022;

**Second,** Petitioners request that within twelve months following the submission of this supplement, or by June 14, 2023, the Department of Parks & Recreation’s GreenThumb Program conduct an assessment of all remaining community gardens on City-owned land and confirm, in consultation with community gardeners, that these gardens meet the regulatory criteria for CEA designation; and

**Third,** Petitioners request that within twelve months following the submission of this supplement, or by June 14, 2023, City agencies designate as CEAs all City-owned community gardens within their respective jurisdictions that meet the regulatory criteria for CEA designation, based on GreenThumb’s assessment.

Community gardens clearly qualify for CEA designation. SEQRA regulations authorize state and local agencies to designate areas as CEAs if they exhibit at least one of four characteristics: (1) a benefit to human health; (2) a natural setting; (3) agricultural, social, cultural, historic, recreational, or educational values; or (4) ecological or hydrological values that may be negatively affected by disturbances.<sup>35</sup> Community gardens possess all four characteristics. As described in our original petition and the pages that follow, gardens (1) improve physical and mental health; (2) provide natural settings in areas underserved by public parks;



Drew Community Garden. Photo by Sorangel Liriano

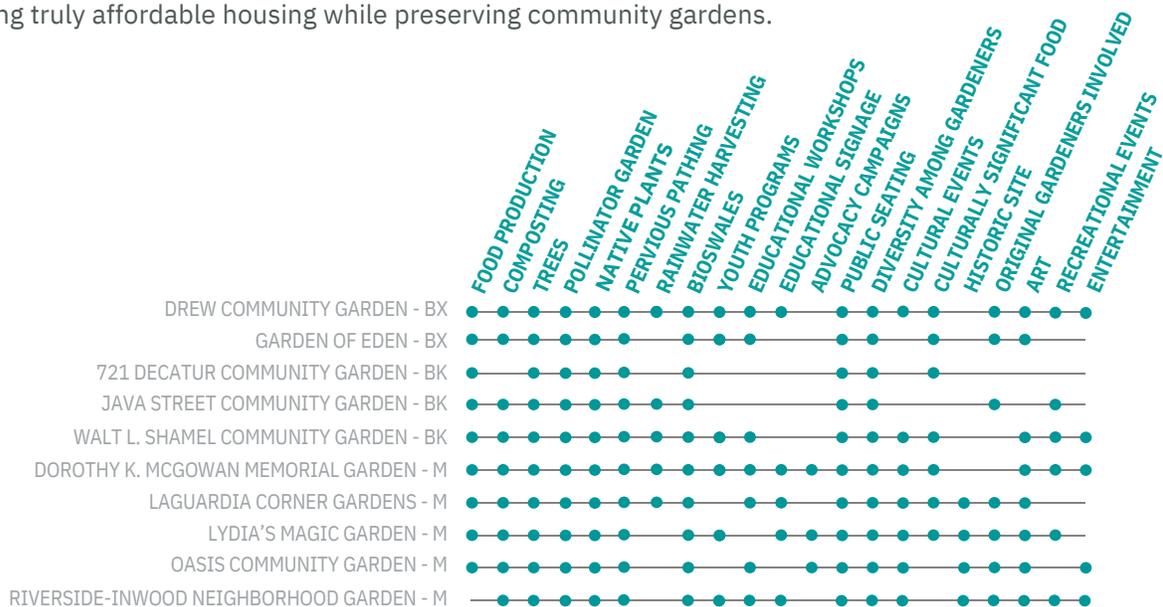


Figure 2. Community Garden Jurisdiction. Credit: Chabeli Rodríguez / Source: GreenThumb

(3) offer opportunities for New Yorkers to engage in community-led urban agriculture, celebrate the cultures of gardeners and their neighborhoods, preserve personal and neighborhood histories, promote recreation, and offer educational opportunities; and (4) provide wildlife habitat and green sustainable infrastructure. Thus, gardens merit CEA designation.

**Designating the City’s community gardens as CEAs does not conflict with supporting affordable housing.** Community gardens and truly affordable housing are both essential components of livable and equitable communities. And “many gardeners say it’s not necessary for the city to pit essential community resources—access to fresh food and housing—against one another.”<sup>36</sup> If an affordable housing development is planned on or near a community garden, CEA designation ensures that decision-makers do not fail to consider all of the benefits the garden provides to the local community. In this way, CEA designation helps decision-makers balance the important roles that both affordable housing and community gardens play in communities. A recent report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change highlights the importance of this balancing, explaining that high-density development without “adequate provision of green and open spaces” may intensify the urban heat island effect.<sup>37</sup>

Fully considering all of the benefits of community gardens may encourage decision-makers to increase the amount of greenspace in affordable housing developments, resulting in projects that better serve the community’s needs. Intervale Green, a residential building by the Women’s Housing and Economic Development Corporation, offers a model for such a project; it includes affordable apartments and a rooftop farm where residents grow vegetables, herbs, and flowers. However, CEA designation would not prevent necessary, beneficial development from moving forward. For this reason, the City cannot rely on the need to build affordable housing—which, too often, results in the creation of housing that is not truly affordable for longtime community members<sup>38</sup>—as an excuse for failing to acknowledge the vitally important contributions and significance of community gardens. The City can and should do both—by supporting truly affordable housing while preserving community gardens.



**Figure 3. Community Garden Green Infrastructure and Ecosystem Services.**

*Credit: Chabeli Rodríguez / Sources: Gardener reports & Earthjustice*

# DREW COMMUNITY GARDEN

## Human Health Benefits

- Drew Community Garden<sup>39</sup> encourages healthy eating by providing community members with free produce. According to Board Secretary Ivette Vargas: “Anything we have in excess, we give to the community for free. When the fruits, herbs, and vegetables are ready to be picked, we let the community know to come by.”
- Vargas shares every harvest with her mother, who was diagnosed with leukemia. For Vargas, providing her mother with healthful produce was “the catalyst for wanting to go gung-ho on becoming a garden member.” As she explains, “I knew that the food we were eating before joining the garden was hurting us not only physically, but emotionally.”
- The garden supported community members’ mental and physical health during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic. Vargas recognizes: “We provided a safe place during the pandemic for children to take off their masks and run around; the garden was a place where they could run around free, where they didn’t have to feel like they were going to get sick or that they were trapped in their apartments.”

## Natural Settings

- Located on the banks of the Bronx River, the garden offers an opportunity to experience nature. According to Vargas: “I come to the garden to read a book with my blanket and picnic bag. That for me is very peaceful. Just sitting on a rock, watching the river flow by. Feeding Phil and Lil, our resident birds.”

## Cultural, Social, Educational & Recreational Benefits

- “Community gardens are needed to bring people together to share each other’s cultures,” Vargas explains. “It’s not just about having a place to come to; it’s about socializing and learning from each other.”
- The garden hosts community celebrations and cooking demonstrations. For instance, a Native American gardener led a summer solstice blessing, and other gardeners demonstrated how to prepare *sofrito*, a blend of garlic, onions, peppers, cilantro, and other herbs and vegetables that is a staple cooking base in the Latinx Caribbean community.
- Most gardeners grow culturally appropriate fruits and vegetables that they grew up eating. “From time to time, gardeners will try other people’s harvests” (Vargas).



Photos by Sorangel Liriano

## Agricultural Benefits

- The garden provides participants with opportunities to grow and harvest their own fruits, vegetables, and herbs, including mulberry, tomatoes, carrots, cabbage, broccoli, kale, lettuce, cucumber, thyme, cilantro, mint, nettle leaf, lavender, and lemon balm.
- As Vargas puts it: “Being able to grow your own food—for me, that’s being rich.”

## Ecological & Hydrological Sensitivities

- The garden boasts colorful flowers that attract native wildlife including birds, Monarchs and other butterflies, and bees.
- The garden is a Certified Wildlife Habitat. According to Vargas: “We have squirrels, geese and birds like red cardinals, sparrows, robins, and hawks. We had a wild turkey in the garden at one point. It’s so nice to be in the garden and look around at all the species. They feel safe being at the garden.”



Photo by Sorangel Liriano

“When I volunteer at Drew Gardens, I feel that I’m really making a difference, whether it be with giving someone two handfuls of tomatoes or just sitting down listening to them or sharing some garden skills with them.”

Ivette Vargas, Board Secretary

# GARDEN OF EDEN

## Human Health Benefits

- According to Garden Lead Ali Malone: “The open space, the fresh air—that alone is good for mental health. The garden has kept me sane. I can come here and relax, turn soil, plan, sit on my chair and read, and have my own space.”
- Planting, weeding, harvesting, and maintaining the garden provides gardeners with physical exercise. Malone recognizes: “Gardening is a lot of work.”
- The garden also offers community members access to fresh and nutrient-rich fruits and vegetables that support a healthful diet.

## Natural Settings

- Garden of Eden offers fruit trees, flowers, and vegetation that provide aesthetic enjoyment. Malone says: “I love flowers and plants. We’ve got them all around the garden. When I finish planting my flowers, I can come back and watch them grow. That’s what I love. We’ve got five different colors of lilies when you come in the gate. I love that.”

## Cultural, Social, Educational & Recreational Benefits

- Community members participate in cultural and social gatherings, including traditional pig roasts organized by garden members with roots in the Southern United States, cooking lessons, and birthday parties.
- Members plant culturally appropriate foods, such as collard greens and rosemary, oregano, thyme, and mint for teas and herbal remedies.
- Ample picnic-style seating allows for reading and socializing.
- Youth participate in workshops on hygiene and COVID-19 safety led by a neighboring hospital. They also can borrow books from the garden’s mini library.
- A partnership with Small Axe Peppers Bronx Hot Sauce offers opportunities for garden members to supplement their incomes by selling hot peppers.
- Gardeners utilize innovative methods to plant flowers throughout the garden, including using milk crates and up-cycled tires as planters.



Photo by Sorangel Liriano

“I’ve been at the garden almost forty years. I planted every tree in here. All the trees have fruits on them. My grapevine has tons of grapes, and that’s not from one year, you can look at it and tell. Many years!”

Ali Malone, Garden Lead



Photos by Sorangel Liriano

## Agricultural Benefits

- According to Malone, the garden offers: “Green space, open space where the community can plant their own vegetables, whatever they like. They get to plant it, they get to harvest it, and they get to give it to their friends and their neighbors.” Members grow peppers, kale, corn, cherries, strawberries, grapes, tomatoes, and apples.

## Ecological & Hydrological Sensitivities

- Native plants and fruit trees are planted throughout the garden, providing a haven for pollinators and wildlife.

# 721 DECATUR COMMUNITY GARDEN

## Human Health Benefits

- According to Gardener Petra Zanki: “Many of our gardeners are of mature age, and for them, the garden is a mental space. It is a place to grow your own food, but it is also a place for meditation—meditation through gardening. It gives them peace of mind.”

## Natural Settings

- The garden offers open space in Bedford-Stuyvesant, a neighborhood underserved by parks. Zanki recognizes that: “The garden gives a sense of vitality to the neighborhood. There are not a lot of free, green zones around.”
- The garden provides members with a safe space to spend time outdoors. According to Zanki: “During the pandemic, we heard elderly gardeners say, ‘The garden is our oasis. This is our peace of mind. This is our place of comfort. This is our piece of nature.’ For the people who did not have a backyard, having access to the garden—to sit under the peach tree, just looking at these plants—it’s huge.”



Photos by Sorangel Liriano

## Cultural, Social, Educational & Recreational Benefits

- At the garden, community members share their cultures through food. For example, Zanki explains: “Many of our members are from different places in the Caribbean, and we learn about each other’s herbs and vegetables like callaloo, okra, parsley, sage, rosemary, lemon balm, oregano.”
- The garden hosts “work days,” when members old and new are invited to participate in tasks around the garden. For Zanki, this is an opportunity to reunite with her artist friends and connect with neighbors. Zanki explains: “The garden gives us an opportunity to come together, to share resources, to learn from our neighbors.”



Photo by Sorangel Liriano

“Community gardens are better than parks because they are active. You can’t modify parks, you can only sit there, do whatever the parks tell you to do. Parks are great but they have a lot of rules. Gardens are always evolving, they are adaptable, they are creative spaces.”  
Petra Zanki, Gardener



Photos by Sorangel Liriano

## Agricultural Benefits

- Gardeners tend peach and fig trees and grow blueberries, tomatoes, eggplants, peppers, collard greens, beans, cabbages, kale, strawberries, sweet potatoes, garlic, leeks, and squash for the community to enjoy.

## Ecological & Hydrological Sensitivities

- Garden plants—including sunflowers, hydrangeas, orange cosmos, marigolds, roses, trout lilies, Virginia bluebells, swamp hibiscuses, Golden Alexanders, daffodils, morning glories, and mallows—attract bees, butterflies, and other beneficial pollinators that are sensitive to change.

# JAVA STREET COMMUNITY GARDEN

## Human Health Benefits

- Java Street Community Garden promotes nutrition by increasing access to fresh fruits and vegetables. As Garden Steering Committee Member Brian Henderson explains, “It’s nice to be able to grow your own food and have food that you know is fresh.”



Photo by Sorangel Liriano

## Cultural, Social, Educational & Recreational Benefits

- The garden is a space where community members can congregate and interact with their neighbors. According to Henderson: “I moved to the neighborhood only knowing a handful of people. And the garden was one of the main ways that I met people in the neighborhood. I feel like you get to know people in this sort of environment differently than you typically would, and it’s a little easier to just say hello and introduce yourself. I think some of the people that I’m friends with now; I wouldn’t have ever met without the garden.”
- The garden hosts community events—including movie screenings, harvest parties to celebrate fall and the last harvest of the season, a Día de Los Muertos celebration, and the Annual Spring into Summer Celebration—which engage community members and local artists and businesses.

## Agricultural Benefits

- Paw paw, apple, and fig trees at the garden provide gardeners with fresh, seasonal fruits.
- Gardeners plant, harvest, and enjoy strawberries, squash, zucchini, eggplants, tomatoes, asparagus, peppers, kale, Swiss chard, lettuce, mint, thyme, basil, sage, garlic, and other fruits, vegetables, and herbs.

## Ecological & Hydrological Sensitivities

- Gardeners support pollinators and native wildlife by growing a variety of plants, including anemones, windflowers, sunflowers, coneflowers, beebalm, mullein, butterfly weed, peonies, tulips, daffodils, vinca, magnolias, irises, and columbine.



Photos by Sorangel Liriano



Photo by Sorangel Liriano

“My life is better because of the garden. It’s a patch of green in the pavement-covered city. A place to meet different people that live in the neighborhood, some with similar life experiences, but also some whose lives are wildly different from my own. The garden is where I made some of my first friends when moving to the neighborhood.”

Brian Henderson, Garden Steering Committee Member

# WALT L. SHAMEL COMMUNITY GARDEN

## Human Health Benefits

- Access to nature at the garden offers gardeners mental health benefits. According to Gardener and Compost Program Co-Manager Zachary Schulman: “One thing that people tell me is that they feel happy when they see the garden, whether they come in or not. Whether it’s the chickens or the flowers or the plants, it brings them some joy to see the beauty.”
- The garden promotes physical exercise. On garden work days, volunteers are invited to shovel, excavate, lay gravel, and build new structures around the garden.

## Natural Settings

- The garden provides open space for residents with limited access to nature. According to Schulman: “For a lot of folks who are in small apartments or don’t have a backyard or any greenspace at their home, . . . it becomes like a neighborhood backyard to hang out and connect with folks.”

## Cultural, Social, Educational & Recreational Benefits

- The garden offers community members in Crown Heights a place to gather. Schulman explains: “The garden is a place that is really grounding for me. It’s a place where I meet new people. It’s a place where I connect with old friends. It’s a place where time shifts and the outside world can disappear. It’s a place where I can explore and see things in a new way.”

## Historic Value

- Gardeners honor the history of the neighborhood by incorporating materials from previous structures in the garden’s design. Schulman explains: “Like many gardens in New York City, there was a home that used to be in this location, and it was burned down or torn down decades ago. There are remnants of that home’s interior and exterior structure—pieces of brownstone cornice, bricks, and floor tiles—that members unearthed or found on the surface over the years and have placed around the garden. We have little bits of those things around as a reminder of what was here and how this space came to be.”



Photos by Sorangel Liriano

## Agricultural Benefits

- Chickens kept at the garden provide fresh eggs for community members.
- Gardeners plant and harvest fruits, vegetables, and herbs including eggplant, peppers, radish, garlic, kale, callaloo, grapes, plums, berries, stevia, rosemary, and lemon balm.

## Ecological & Hydrological Sensitivities

- Sustainable infrastructure in the garden helps mitigate flooding and reduce pollution in the City’s waterways. According to Schulman: “We harvest rainwater from a neighbor’s roof, and we use it for irrigation. By harvesting rainwater from the roof, especially when there is a larger rain event, we are diverting that water from the sewer system and minimizing the effects of combined sewer overflow. In effect, we’re contributing to lessening pollution in the city’s waterways, especially around combined sewer overflow locations.”
- Peonies, roses, astilbe, bee balm, hostas, morning glories, tulips, daffodils, asters, and other plants at the garden attract pollinators and native wildlife.
- Birdhouses throughout the garden provide shelter for birds.



Photo by Sorangel Liriano

“Community gardens are very free spaces. Despite all the rules from the City, people still respect this space and feel that there’s a lot of flexibility, and I think that is very unique, especially in New York City. There’s this unique ability to use this greenspace in an experimental and exploratory and flexible way while still respecting the mission of community engagement and ecological restoration.” Zachary Schulman, Gardener & Compost Program Co-Manager

# DOROTHY K. MCGOWAN MEMORIAL GARDEN

## Human Health Benefits

- Garden Treasurer and Steward Timothy Brown explains the mental health benefits of gardening: “I could be having the worst day and come in the garden, and within 10 or 15 minutes, start doing tasks or sit with the plants and feel better about the moment. When you come in here and you’re upset or agitated, the garden can bring you down. Or if you’re sad, it’ll cheer you up.”
- In 2021, the garden distributed 2,076 pounds of fresh vegetables to community members in need.
- In addition to donating food, gardeners responded to the pandemic by distributing personal protective equipment and offering information and other resources to community members.



Photos by Sorangel Liriano

## Natural Settings

- The garden offers Washington Heights residents a respite from the City’s hustle and bustle. Brown explains: “There’d be times I walk out of the garden, and it was almost like an awakening . . . because you realize that you’re in a noisy, busy, crazy city. It’s so calm and peaceful in the garden.”
- “During the pandemic, the garden was so beneficial for a lot of us, especially some of the elderly people in the New York City Housing Authority building on the corner. People would want to come out to get fresh air, but the parks were way more crowded than they would normally be. People could come here and be isolated and even maskless if they were here by themselves. Their kids could come run around and play and get out energy, or the elderly individuals could come here and sit.” (Brown)

## Cultural, Social, Educational & Recreational Benefits

- The garden offers community members opportunities to share their cultures. For example, Ethiopian community members lead an annual Ethiopian coffee ceremony and plant Ethiopian rue, a staple herb not easily found in local grocery stores.
- The garden is a space to connect with neighbors. According to Brown: “There’s this one family that’s been in the neighborhood for thirty years, and so has this other family. They’d see each other, but they never spoke. Now they’re best friends because they spoke in the garden.”
- Youth programming at the garden—including yoga and Zumba classes, environmental summer camps, and other workshops—led the garden to receive the 2019 Youth Programming Award at GreenThumb’s Annual Garden Recognition Ceremony.
- The garden offers recreation for students with special needs from a local elementary school. Brown says: “When the special education students come to the garden, they’re calm, they’re happy, they’re going around and laughing.”

## Agricultural Benefits

- Gardeners plant, harvest, and enjoy healthful foods, including broccoli, lettuce, green onions, cilantro, basil, chocolate mint, pineapple sage, thyme, oregano, jalapeno, cherry tomatoes, ground cherries, sweet banana peppers, French beans, strawberries, dill, bok choy, mustard greens, cabbages, kale, callaloo, cucumbers, raspberries, sugar snap peas, spinach, radishes, turnips, and okra.
- Chickens provide fresh eggs for community members.

## Ecological & Hydrological Sensitivities

- The garden’s pollinator flower beds provide critical habitat for bees, butterflies, moths, flies, beetles, bats, and hummingbirds.



Photo by Sorangel Liriano

“I come out of the garden so energized. I could be so drained of energy, and I can come in here and I meet neighbors—say there’s somebody from Jamaica, and they’re telling me about callaloo, which is a Jamaican plant, and I hear about that, and I’m like, ‘I’ll grow that for you’—it overwhelms my cup with energy and happiness.”  
Timothy Brown, Treasurer & Steward

# LAGUARDIA CORNER GARDENS



Photo by Sorangel Liriano

“It is an important activity to be in contact with nature, to grow things. I go to the garden almost every day.”  
Barbara Cahn,  
Garden Chairperson

## Human Health Benefits

- LaGuardia Corner Gardens offers community members opportunities to grow fresh, healthful foods and engage in physical activity through gardening.
- The garden promotes mental health by providing community members with a space to decompress. According to Garden Chairperson Barbara Cahn: “If something has happened in my life, if I am upset or worried about something, the first thing that I think to do is go to the garden, go into my plot, and start weeding, planting something, and taking care of it. It is my protected space. I can go to the garden and feel better.”



Photos by Sorangel Liriano

## Natural Settings

- The garden provides critical access to nature in Manhattan’s Community Board 2, which has only 0.2 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents—over 85% less than the average across community board districts in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Queens.
- As Cahn explains: “This is a neighborhood without a lot of parks. There’s Washington Square Park, but if you ever go in there on the weekends, it’s a mob scene, filled with people. Our garden is more of a quiet oasis.”
- Garden Vice Chairperson Ellen Reznick agrees: “The garden provides a peaceful oasis for community members of all ages.”
- Former Garden Chairperson and Beekeeper Sara Jones adds: “Garden members are so proud of their work, they [regularly] keep the [garden] gate open . . . to host their neighbors in the quiet space.”
- At the garden’s annual Rose Walk, community members are invited to walk through the garden’s winding mosaic pathways and enjoy hundreds of rose varieties in bloom.

## Cultural, Social, Educational & Recreational Benefits

- According to Jones: “The Garden has made it a mission to focus on education.” Garden volunteers regularly host class trips for diverse schoolchildren of all ages, during which they provide information about gardening, pollination, and composting.
- Reznick explains: “We are an informative, welcoming group of gardeners who answer questions and educate anyone who asks about the plants and the pollinators.”
- The garden hosts recreational and cultural events including art workshops, meditation workshops, poetry readings, concerts, and showcases featuring local artists.

## Agricultural Benefits

- In addition to growing a variety of flowers, fruits, herbs, and vegetables, gardeners share information about agricultural techniques. Cahn explains: “We are a community. People of the garden are very generous with their time, their knowledge. I can ask a gardener about a plant on their plot, and they’ll just give [me] part of it. And they’ll help you with your plants and give advice on how to keep your plants healthy.”

## Ecological & Hydrological Sensitivities

- The garden acts as a waystation for migrating birds and butterflies.
- A range of plants and flowers—including alliums, bluebells, columbines, daffodils, sunflowers, and zinnias—provide pollinator and native wildlife habitat at the garden.
- According to Cahn: “We have been actively focusing on growing native pollinator plants, to encourage bees, butterflies, and other beneficial insects. We garden organically, and do not use any pesticides.”
- The garden includes birdbaths and birdhouses to support native wildlife. Jones explains that, for years, the garden’s beehives were “a major source of fascination for the neighborhood.” And gardeners recently built a butterfly enclosure, which will protect caterpillars and chrysalises, while also serving as an educational tool for the community.

# LYDIA'S MAGIC GARDEN



Photo by Sorangel Liriano

“When you garden and grow your own food, you diversify what you eat because you grow it yourself. It broadens your food vocabulary.”  
Alicia Williamson,  
Horticultural Coordinator

## Human Health Benefits

- Lydia’s Magic Garden promotes nutrition by increasing access to fresh fruits and vegetables. According to Alicia Williamson, the Horticultural Coordinator: “One season, we partnered with the housing complex next door—they get weekly fresh food boxes through GrowNYC, and we supplemented their food boxes with herbs on a weekly basis—so everybody grew herbs, and then we’d collect them and drop them off. This season we’re doing a pepper initiative, so we’ll grow peppers and then donate them to the community.”

## Natural Settings

- East Harlem residents enjoy the natural settings offered by the garden. Williamson explains: “When we first got the garden, after we built it out and started growing flowers, a woman walking by said, ‘You know, I walk down this street now to go to the subway for work because it’s so pretty.’ And people really do that. I’ve worked in different gardens around the city, and people really do go out of their way to walk past outdoor greenspace that is nicer.”
- The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the importance of the garden as an open space in the community. According to Williamson, it was “one of the few places you could sit outside and not be around other people, to read, or just look at the garden.”

## Cultural, Social, Educational & Recreational Benefits

- “I’ve met so many more people at the garden and made friends with different kinds of people than I would otherwise—because you don’t really interact with people in a pleasant way in the City; usually, it’s just on the subway, on the bus, on the train—so this is a nicer, kinder, gentler way to meet people. It’s much more relaxing.” (Williamson)
- The garden offers opportunities for young people to learn about foods and healthy eating habits. Williamson explains: “In the past, I’ve done workshops with children where they seed, plant, and harvest. And then they’ll actually eat salad if they grow it themselves. I’ve worked with nonprofits and school programs, and I think gardening does impact children because they are harvesting, and they have more of a tendency to “eat vegetables and herbs because they worked and grew them.”

## Agricultural Benefits

- Gardeners plant and harvest grapes, apples, blueberries, tomatoes, corn, cucumbers, squash, peppers, beets, radishes, zucchini, kale, collard greens, cilantro, basil, dill, and lavender, along with other fruits, herbs, and vegetables.

## Ecological & Hydrological Sensitivities

- The garden is a haven for pollinators and wildlife. Williamson explains: “As soon as we started planting, even before we had grow beds, we started with trees and flowers. In the first season, we had dragonflies, butterflies—I like to watch the animals. We plant fruits and vegetables especially for the birds, the squirrels, the pollinators, praying mantises, ladybugs—they seem to like the asparagus.”



Photos by Sorangel Liriano

# OASIS COMMUNITY GARDEN

## Human Health Benefits

- Oasis Community Garden promotes mental health by offering a tranquil space where community members can escape the stresses of city life. According to Garden President Macarry Pobanz: “Being able to come to the garden has been such a gift—to be able to grow my own food, to have a space where you can relax and let go. People in the neighborhood like sitting in the garden and transporting themselves out of the city.”



Photo by Sorangel Liriano

## Natural Settings

- The verdant garden—replete with trees, bushes, plants, and perennial flowers—offers a respite from summer heat for community members in Hell’s Kitchen. According to Garden Treasurer Gary DiPasquale: “In general, it feels cooler when you walk into the garden. You walk by the garden, and you can feel the coolness from the garden on the sidewalk.”
- As one of two GreenThumb gardens in Hell’s Kitchen, Oasis Community Garden offers critical access to nature. Pobanz explains, “I think this particular space is really necessary and rare. It’s a quiet botanical garden. We do grow food, we do also serve as a place where people can gather, but I think having that quiet space where you can come in and hear birds—people respect that.”
- According to Pobanz, community members can appreciate the beauty of the garden year-round: “There’s this one spot in the garden where we have a curvy path, and we have different flowers—perennials and annuals—that grow at different points in the season. I always like looking down this path as it curves and seeing the changing seasons.”



Photo by Sorangel Liriano

“The garden is one of the lasting things on this block. There’s been a lot of development on this block, but the garden has been a constant.”  
Macarry Pobanz,  
Garden President

## Cultural, Social, Educational & Recreational Benefits

- According to Pobanz: “I really got to know the community more through the garden. I know a variety of people now, and every time I walk down the block, I’m saying ‘Hi’ to somebody, and it’s because of the garden.”
- Community members are drawn to the garden for the opportunity to paint, read a book, observe the art and sculptures sprinkled throughout, or sit on the Adirondack wooden chairs at “The Beach,” a sandbox in the garden.
- Local artists from nearby theaters often rehearse in the garden.
- The garden offers educational programming for local elementary school students, including programs on composting and planting. According to DiPasquale: “Students from an elementary school on 10th Avenue came in and planted seeds, and then they came back to see what they’d grown.”

## History

- Gardeners honor the history of the neighborhood by incorporating materials from previous structures in the garden’s design. According to DiPasquale: “We have an old bathtub that we’ve kept goldfish in for the last 7 or 8 years. We dug up an old sink, and we have it sitting near the bathtub, and we have flowers planted in it.”
- The garden’s winding pathways and garden beds are fashioned from the bricks of tenements that once stood on the lot.

## Agricultural Benefits

- Gardeners grow and harvest herbs and vegetables, including kale, peppers, basil, arugula, and tomatoes.

## Ecological & Hydrological Sensitivities

- The garden’s perimeter includes plants that attract bees, butterflies, and other beneficial pollinators and wildlife, such as plumbago, hostas, cleomes, marigolds, coneflowers, ranunculus, daffodils, violets, mums, asters, rose of Sharon bushes, roses, columbine, and lilies.
- Birdbaths and birdhouses throughout the garden provide refreshment and shelter for birds.

# RIVERSIDE-INWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD GARDEN

## Human Health Benefits

- The Riverside-Inwood Neighborhood Garden promotes physical exercise through gardening activities, including planting, weeding, and maintenance. According to Founder and Garden Chair Maggie Clarke: “The garden has kept me a little bit more in shape than I would have been otherwise.”

## Natural Settings

- The garden is an open space designed as a botanical garden with trees, bushes, and flowers planted around the oval perimeter. Community members come to the garden to enjoy nature, often sitting on the garden’s lush grass, observing the goldfish in its pond, or admiring its 30-foot blue spruce.



Photos by Sorangel Liriano

## Cultural, Social, Educational & Recreational Benefits

- Community members are drawn to the garden for opportunities to observe its sculptures and other art pieces, to sit on its benches and bistro chairs with friends, or to rest while waiting for a bus to arrive at the busy intersection nearby.
- The garden hosts community events, including an annual art fair, a bi-annual flea market, and a holiday party.



Photo by Sorangel Liriano

## Agricultural Benefits

- The garden offers community members the opportunity to learn about plants and agricultural practices. Clarke explains: “At the garden, I have learned a lot about plants and gardening and composting.”

## Ecological & Hydrological Sensitivities

- Gardeners have designated the garden as a Certified Wildlife Habitat in accordance with criteria developed by the National Wildlife Federation, meaning that gardeners employ sustainable practices, and the garden provides local wildlife with adequate food, water, cover, and places to raise young. For instance, native plants grow throughout the garden, and birds nest in the trees.
- Because of gardeners’ efforts to attract pollinators, the garden became a Certified Monarch Waystation. Clarke observes that the garden “has become more of a butterfly garden.” She explains: “We grow about five varieties of milkweed, and we’ve got lots of other butterfly-friendly species at the garden as well. We have butterfly bushes, we have echinacea, we have rudbeckias, we have giant ironweed, as well as New York ironweed, phlox, and many more.”



Photo by Sorangel Liriano

“During the height of the pandemic, we were the only outlet in Upper Manhattan where community members could drop their food scraps for composting—they closed everything else. We stayed open. We saw a massive increase of people dropping off their food scraps when the city shut its collection. The word got out. People were coming out of the woodwork.”  
Maggie Clarke, Founder & Garden Chair

# SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

## TOOLS

**American Forests**, *Tree Equity Score*,  
<https://treeequityscore.org/>.

Tree Equity Score calculates scores based on how much tree canopy and surface temperature align with income, employment, race, age, and health factors in the United States. In New York City, areas in the Bronx and Queens have the lowest tree equity scores.

**CAPA Strategies**, *Heat Watch*,

<https://www.capastrategies.com/capa-heat-watch>.  
Heat Watch provides high-resolution descriptions of urban heat across the ambient environment through a coordinated data-collection campaign with local communities and organizations.

## MEDIA

**Stephen Satterfield et al.**, *Black Gardeners Find Refuge in the Soil*, N.Y. Times (Oct. 26, 2021),  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/26/special-series/black-gardeners-pandemic.html>.

Six Black writers share how gardening has helped them re-establish a connection to cultivation and the land.

## ARTICLES & REPORTS

**Cara Buckley**, *Meet an Ecologist Who Works for God (and Against Lawns)*, N.Y. Times (Dec. 3, 2021),  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/03/climate/climate-change-biodiversity.html?smid=url-share>.

Even in small urban and suburban spaces, growing native plants that provide habitat and food for insects and other animals helps support biodiversity.

**John Leland**, *Why an East Harlem Street Is 31 Degrees Hotter Than Central Park West*, N.Y. Times (Aug. 20, 2021), <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/20/nyregion/climate-inequality-nyc.html>.

High temperatures are distributed unequally in New York City, and their distribution follows other patterns of inequality, including race, income, air quality, access to air-conditioning, tree cover, and greenspace.

**Amruta Nori-Sarma et al.**, *Association Between Ambient Heat and Risk of Emergency Department Visits for Mental Health Among US Adults, 2010 to 2019*, JAMA Psychiatry (Feb. 23, 2022).

Days of extreme heat are associated with higher rates of mental health-related visits to the emergency department.

**David J. Nowak et al.**, *Climate Change and Urban Forests* (2021), [https://d3f9k0n15ckvhe.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/FINAL\\_Nowak-Study\\_Full-.pdf](https://d3f9k0n15ckvhe.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/FINAL_Nowak-Study_Full-.pdf).

Because urban trees sequester carbon, lower building energy use, reduce air temperatures, and lessen stormwater runoff, sustaining urban tree cover as urban areas expand would mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and climate change impacts.

**Liz Ohanesian, L.A. Is Now a Certified Wildlife Habitat. Here's Why It's a Big Deal**, Los Angeles Magazine (June 30, 2021), [https://www.lamag.com/citythinkblog/wildlife-habitat-los-angeles/?ct=t\(RSS\\_EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\)](https://www.lamag.com/citythinkblog/wildlife-habitat-los-angeles/?ct=t(RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN)).

Preserving wildlife habitat in urban spaces can help mitigate climate change, declining biodiversity, stormwater runoff, and the urban heat island effect.

**Anthony Nardone, et al., Redlines and Greenspace: The Relationship Between Historical Redlining and 2010 Greenspace Across the United States**, 129 *Env't Health Persp.* 017006-1 (2021). In New York City and other places around the country, areas that were once labeled high investment risks under racist mortgage appraisal practices are now associated with reduced greenspace.

**Jean C. Bikomeye, et al., Resilience and Equity in a Time of Crises: Investing in Public Urban Greenspace Is Now More Essential Than Ever in the US and Beyond**, 18 *Int'l J. Env't Rsch. & Pub. Health*, at 1 (2021).

Strategic investments in public greenspaces in urban neighborhoods will help reduce social inequalities, expand economic opportunities, build resilient urban ecosystems, and improve health equity.

**Yin Yuan, Green Space Exposure on Mortality and Cardiovascular Outcomes in Older Adults: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of Observational Studies**, 33 *Aging Clinical & Experimental Rsch.* 1783 (2021).

Increased exposure to greenspace is associated with a reduced risk of mortality and cardiovascular disease in older individuals.

**Haley M. Lane, et al., Historical Redlining Is Associated with Present-Day Air Pollution Disparities in U.S. Cities**, *Env't Sci. & Tech. Letters A* (2022). In cities across the country, areas that were once labeled high investment risks under racist mortgage appraisal practices are now associated with higher levels of air pollutants.

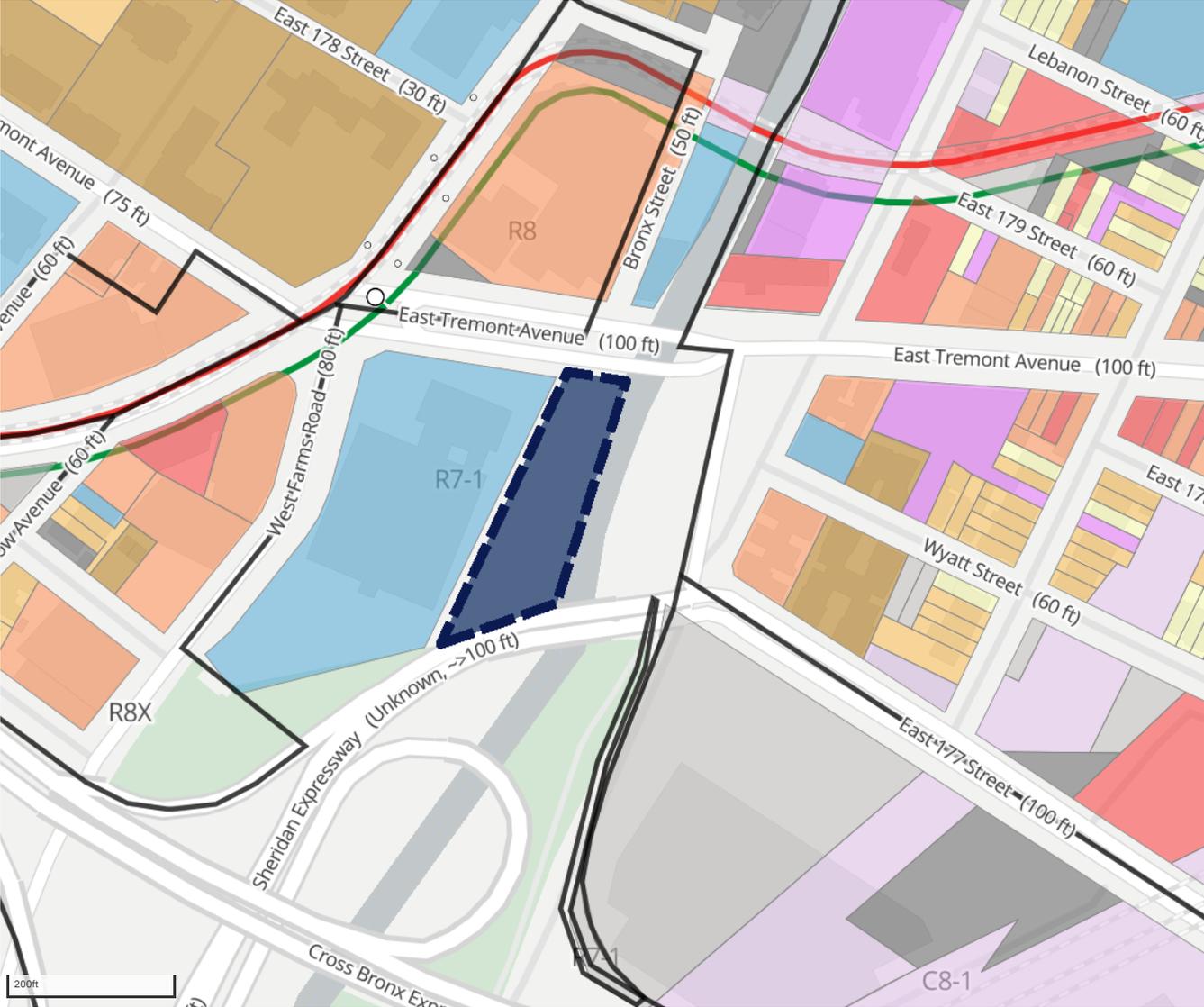


**Ivette Vargas at Drew Community Garden. Photo by Sorangel Liriano**

# APPENDIX

## DREW COMMUNITY GARDEN AREA MAP

Address: 1070 E. Tremont Ave., Bronx, NY 10460  
 Size: 52625 sq. ft.  
 Founding Year: 1996  
 Jurisdiction: NYS DOT



Garden area marked in navy blue at the center of the map.

**Zoning and Land Use**

<p>Tax Lots <input type="checkbox"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: yellow; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> One &amp; Two Family Buildings</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: orange; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Multi-Family Walk-Up Buildings</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: brown; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Multi-Family Elevator Buildings</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: #f4a460; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Mixed Residential &amp; Commercial Buildings</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: red; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Commercial &amp; Office Buildings</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: purple; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Industrial &amp; Manufacturing</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: #d8bfd8; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Transportation &amp; Utility</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: blue; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Public Facilities &amp; Institutions</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: green; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Open Space &amp; Outdoor Recreation</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: gray; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Parking Facilities</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: black; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Vacant Land</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: lightgray; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Other</li> </ul>	<p>Zoning Districts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: red; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Commercial Districts</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: purple; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Manufacturing Districts</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: yellow; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Residence Districts</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: green; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Parks</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: gray; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Battery Park City</li> </ul> <p>Map Created: January 13, 2022              Map Source: zola.planning.nyc.gov</p>
---	---

# GARDEN OF EDEN AREA MAP

Address: 1664 Weeks Ave., Bronx, NY 10457  
 Size: 9025 sq. ft.  
 Founding Year: 1981  
 Jurisdiction: DPR



Garden area marked in navy blue at the center of the map.

## Zoning and Land Use

- Tax Lots
- One & Two Family Buildings
  - Multi-Family Walk-Up Buildings
  - Multi-Family Elevator Buildings
  - Mixed Residential & Commercial Buildings
  - Commercial & Office Buildings
  - Industrial & Manufacturing
  - Transportation & Utility
  - Public Facilities & Institutions
  - Open Space & Outdoor Recreation
  - Parking Facilities
  - Vacant Land
  - Other

## Zoning Districts

- Commercial Districts
- Manufacturing Districts
- Residence Districts
- Parks
- Battery Park City

Map Created: January 13, 2022  
 Map Source: zola.planning.nyc.gov

# 721 DECATUR COMMUNITY GARDEN AREA MAP

Address: 721 Decatur St., Brooklyn, NY 11233  
 Size: 4960 sq. ft.  
 Founding Year: 1970s  
 Jurisdiction: DPR



Garden area marked in navy blue at the center of the map.

### Zoning and Land Use

- Tax Lots
- One & Two Family Buildings
  - Multi-Family Walk-Up Buildings
  - Multi-Family Elevator Buildings
  - Mixed Residential & Commercial Buildings
  - Commercial & Office Buildings
  - Industrial & Manufacturing
  - Transportation & Utility
  - Public Facilities & Institutions
  - Open Space & Outdoor Recreation
  - Parking Facilities
  - Vacant Land
  - Other

### Zoning Districts

- Commercial Districts
- Manufacturing Districts
- Residence Districts
- Parks
- Battery Park City

Map Created: January 13, 2022  
 Map Source: zola.planning.nyc.gov

# JAVA STREET COMMUNITY GARDEN AREA MAP

Address: 59 Java St., Brooklyn, NY 11222  
 Size: 2758 sq. ft.  
 Founding Year: 2011  
 Jurisdiction: DPR



Garden area marked in navy blue at the center of the map.

### Zoning and Land Use

- Tax Lots
- One & Two Family Buildings
  - Multi-Family Walk-Up Buildings
  - Multi-Family Elevator Buildings
  - Mixed Residential & Commercial Buildings
  - Commercial & Office Buildings
  - Industrial & Manufacturing
  - Transportation & Utility
  - Public Facilities & Institutions
  - Open Space & Outdoor Recreation
  - Parking Facilities
  - Vacant Land
  - Other

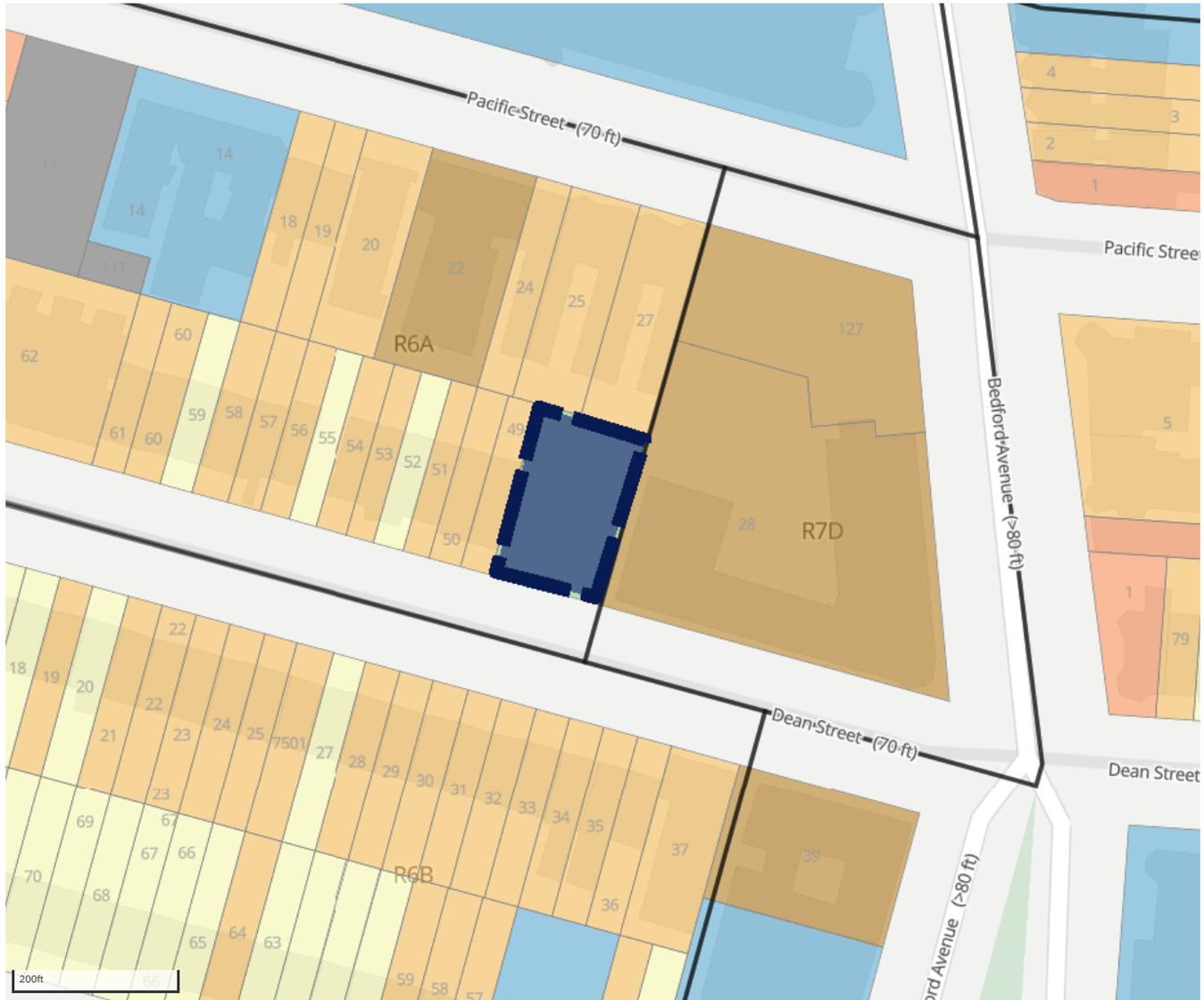
### Zoning Districts

- Commercial Districts
- Manufacturing Districts
- Residence Districts
- Parks
- Battery Park City

Map Created: January 13, 2022  
 Map Source: zola.planning.nyc.gov

# WALT L. SHAMEL COMMUNITY GARDEN AREA MAP

Address: 1095 Dean St., Brooklyn, NY 11216  
 Size: 6500 sq. ft.  
 Founding Year: 1985  
 Jurisdiction: DPR



Garden area marked in navy blue at the center of the map.

### Zoning and Land Use

- Tax Lots
- One & Two Family Buildings
  - Multi-Family Walk-Up Buildings
  - Multi-Family Elevator Buildings
  - Mixed Residential & Commercial Buildings
  - Commercial & Office Buildings
  - Industrial & Manufacturing
  - Transportation & Utility
  - Public Facilities & Institutions
  - Open Space & Outdoor Recreation
  - Parking Facilities
  - Vacant Land
  - Other

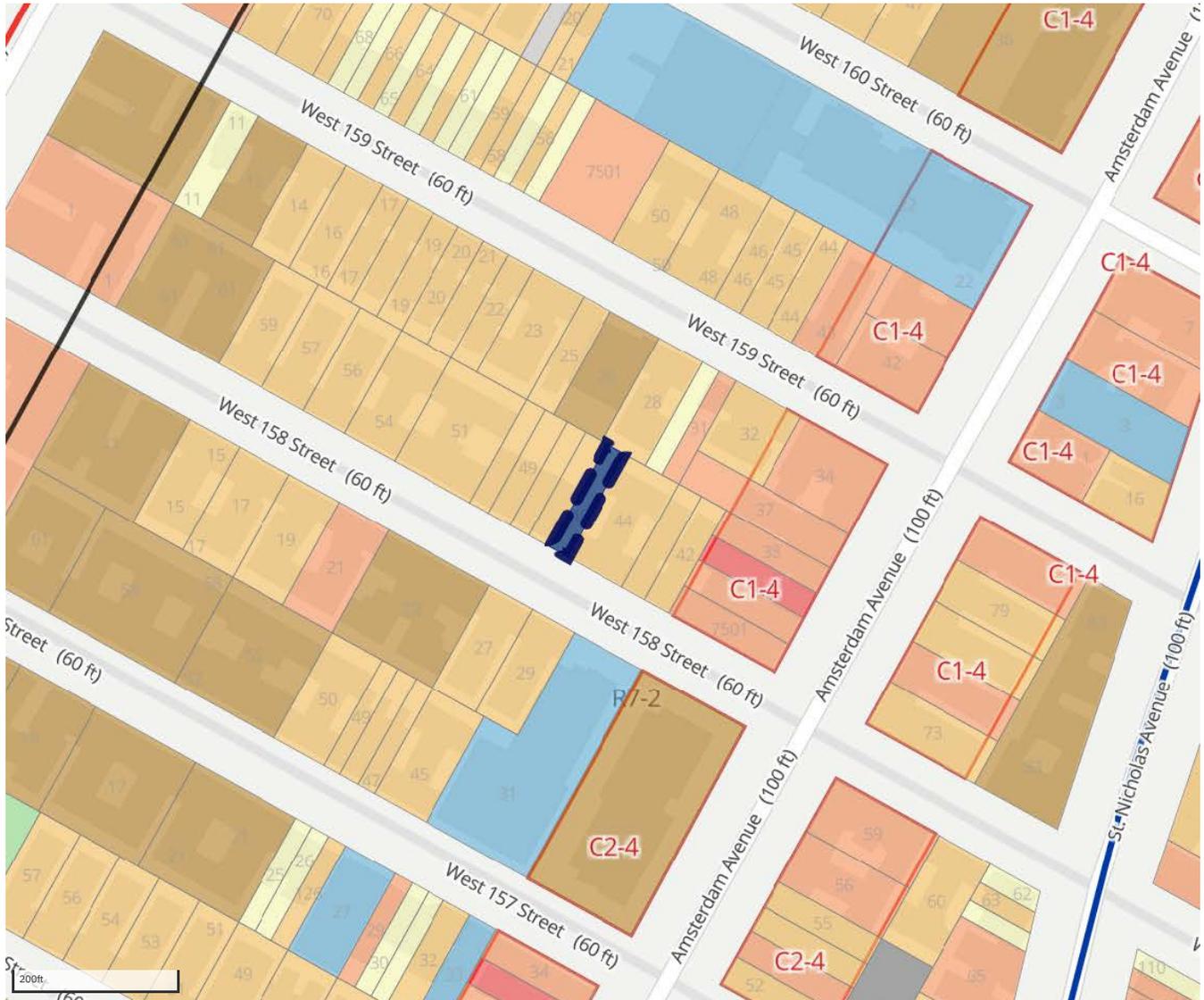
### Zoning Districts

- Commercial Districts
- Manufacturing Districts
- Residence Districts
- Parks
- Battery Park City

Map Created: January 13, 2022  
 Map Source: zola.planning.nyc.gov

# DOROTHY K. MCGOWAN MEMORIAL GARDEN AREA MAP

Address: 513 W. 158th St., New York, NY 10032  
 Size: 1980 sq. ft.  
 Founding Year: 2018  
 Jurisdiction: DPR



Garden area marked in navy blue at the center of the map.

### Zoning and Land Use

- Tax Lots
- One & Two Family Buildings
  - Multi-Family Walk-Up Buildings
  - Multi-Family Elevator Buildings
  - Mixed Residential & Commercial Buildings
  - Commercial & Office Buildings
  - Industrial & Manufacturing
  - Transportation & Utility
  - Public Facilities & Institutions
  - Open Space & Outdoor Recreation
  - Parking Facilities
  - Vacant Land
  - Other

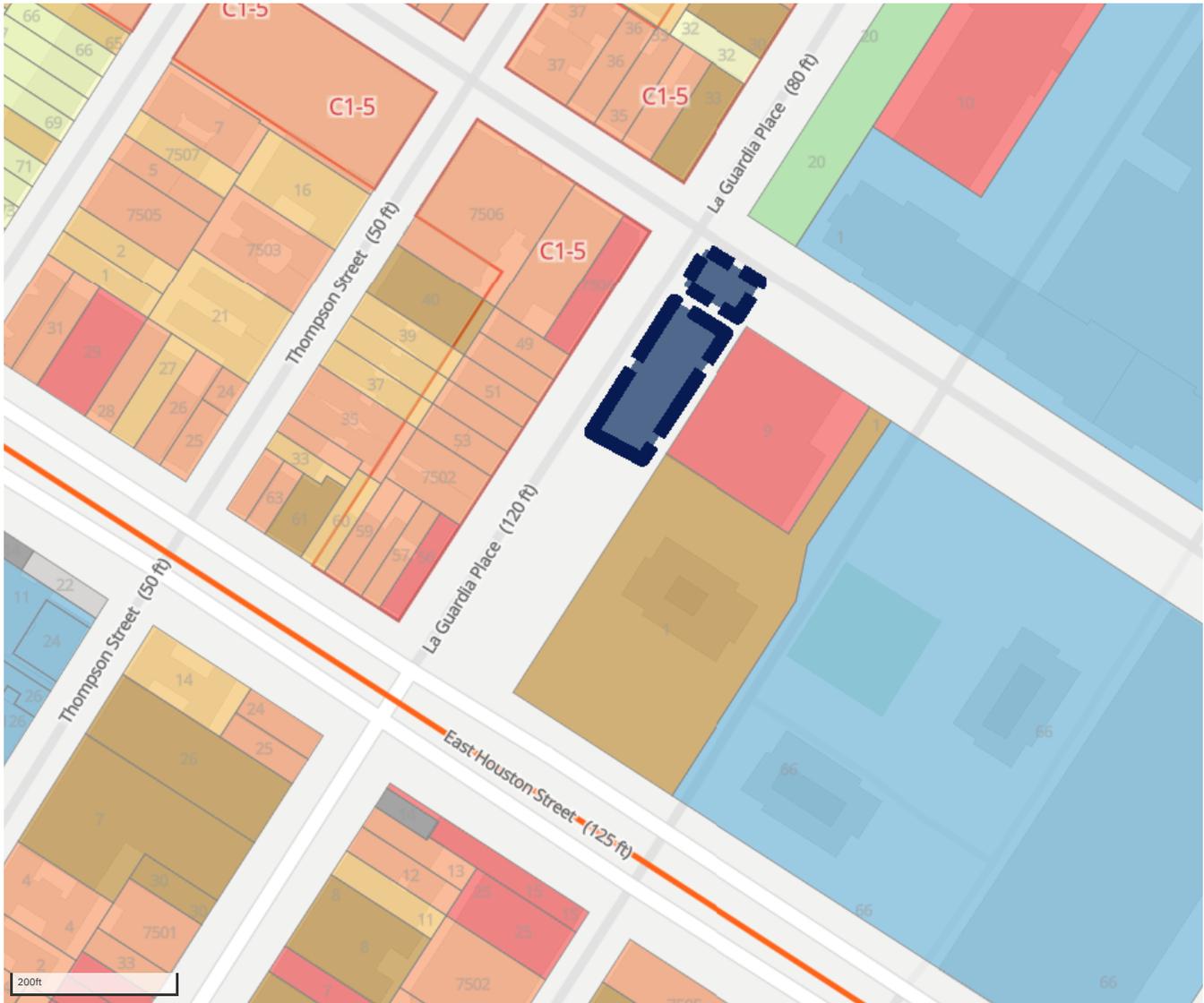
### Zoning Districts

- Commercial Districts
- Manufacturing Districts
- Residence Districts
- Parks
- Battery Park City

Map Created: January 13, 2022  
 Map Source: zola.planning.nyc.gov

# LAGUARDIA CORNER GARDENS AREA MAP

Address: 511 LaGuardia Pl, New York, NY 10012  
 Size: 8500 sq. ft.  
 Founding Year: 1981  
 Jurisdiction: DOT



Garden area marked in navy blue at the center of the map.

### Zoning and Land Use

Tax Lots

- One & Two Family Buildings
- Multi-Family Walk-Up Buildings
- Multi-Family Elevator Buildings
- Mixed Residential & Commercial Buildings
- Commercial & Office Buildings
- Industrial & Manufacturing
- Transportation & Utility
- Public Facilities & Institutions
- Open Space & Outdoor Recreation
- Parking Facilities
- Vacant Land
- Other

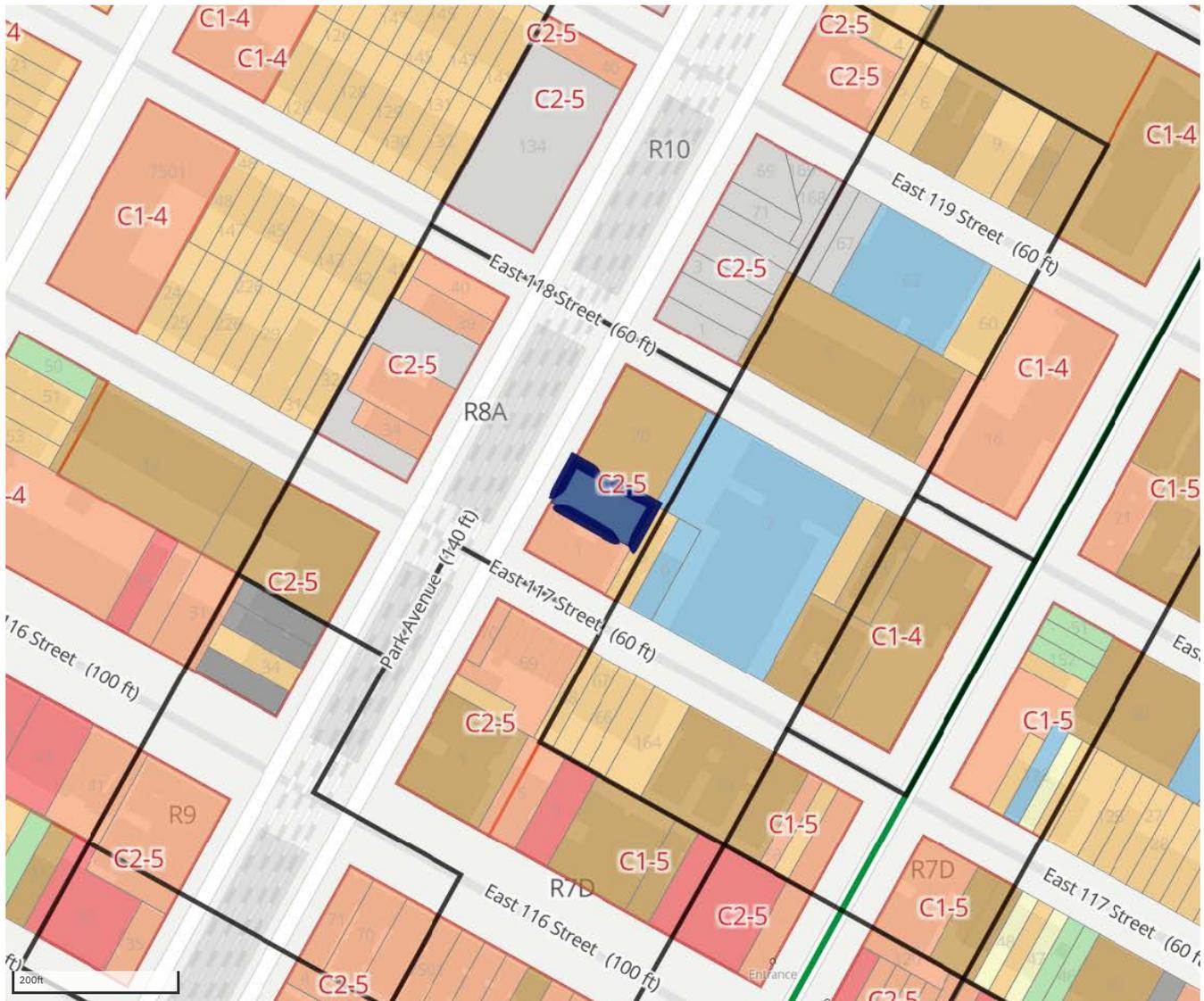
### Zoning Districts

- Commercial Districts
- Manufacturing Districts
- Residence Districts
- Parks
- Battery Park City

Map Created: January 13, 2022  
 Map Source: zola.planning.nyc.gov

# LYDIA'S MAGIC GARDEN AREA MAP

Address: 1665 Park Ave., New York, NY 10035  
 Size: 4545 sq. ft.  
 Founding Year: 1992  
 Jurisdiction: DPR



Garden area marked in navy blue at the center of the map.

### Zoning and Land Use

- Tax Lots
- One & Two Family Buildings
  - Multi-Family Walk-Up Buildings
  - Multi-Family Elevator Buildings
  - Mixed Residential & Commercial Buildings
  - Commercial & Office Buildings
  - Industrial & Manufacturing
  - Transportation & Utility
  - Public Facilities & Institutions
  - Open Space & Outdoor Recreation
  - Parking Facilities
  - Vacant Land
  - Other

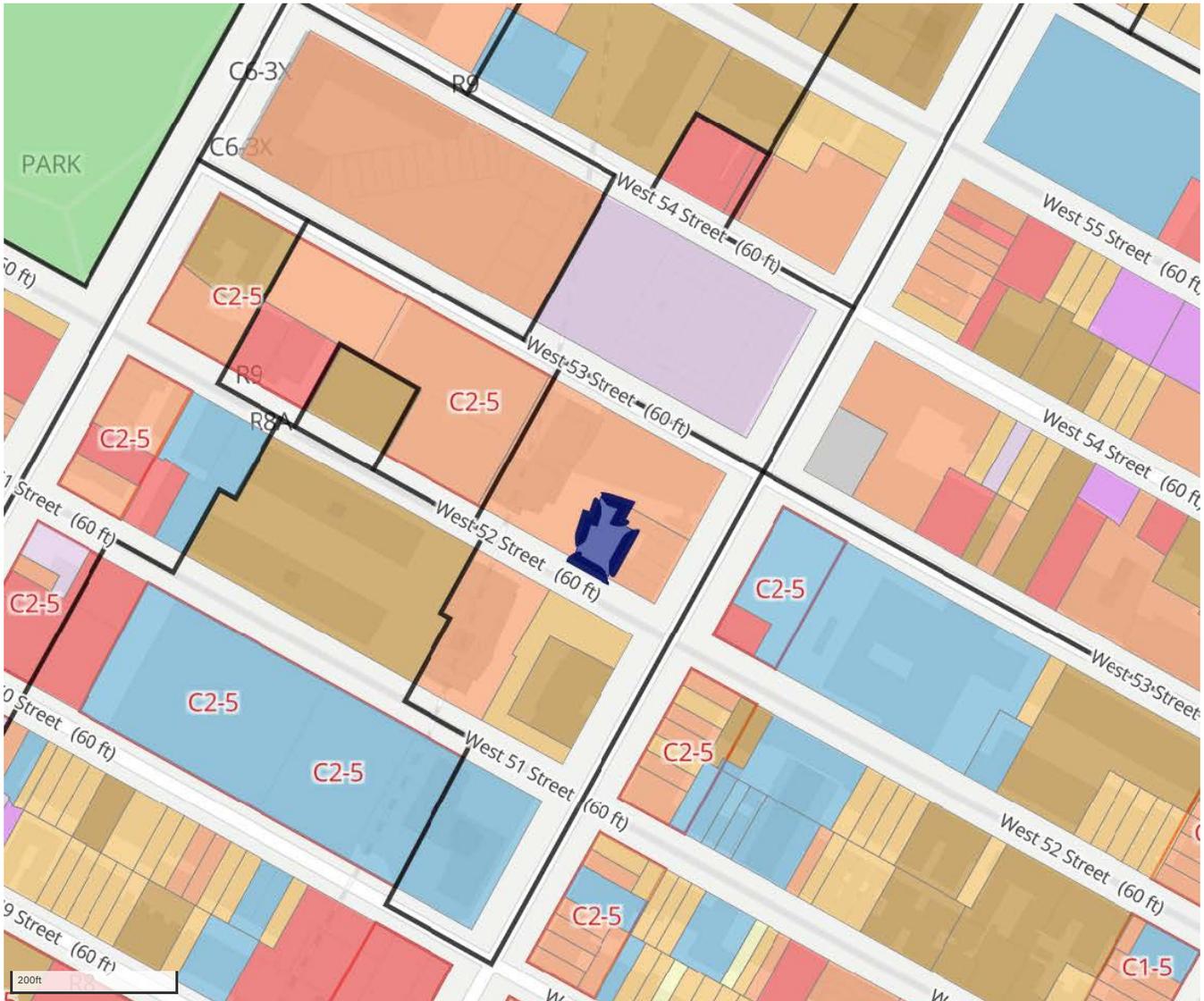
### Zoning Districts

- Commercial Districts
- Manufacturing Districts
- Residence Districts
- Parks
- Battery Park City

Map Created: January 13, 2022  
 Map Source: zola.planning.nyc.gov

# OASIS COMMUNITY GARDEN AREA MAP

Address: 505 W. 52 St., New York, NY 10019  
 Size: 5325 sq. ft.  
 Founding Year: 1978  
 Jurisdiction: DPR



Garden area marked in navy blue at the center of the map.

### Zoning and Land Use

- Tax Lots
- One & Two Family Buildings
  - Multi-Family Walk-Up Buildings
  - Multi-Family Elevator Buildings
  - Mixed Residential & Commercial Buildings
  - Commercial & Office Buildings
  - Industrial & Manufacturing
  - Transportation & Utility
  - Public Facilities & Institutions
  - Open Space & Outdoor Recreation
  - Parking Facilities
  - Vacant Land
  - Other

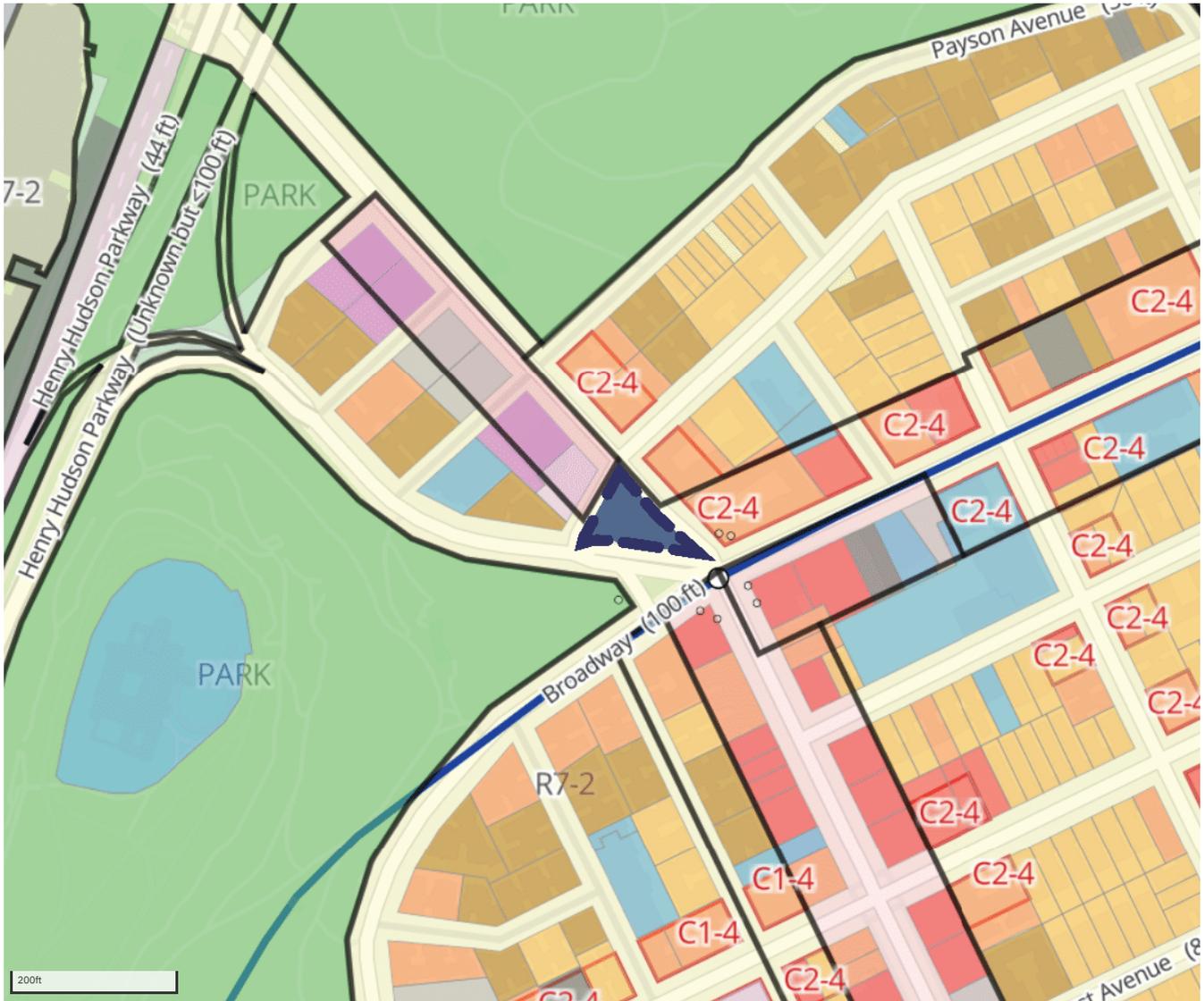
### Zoning Districts

- Commercial Districts
- Manufacturing Districts
- Residence Districts
- Parks
- Battery Park City

Map Created: January 13, 2022  
 Map Source: zola.planning.nyc.gov

# RIVERSIDE-INWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD GARDEN AREA MAP

Address: 1835 Riverside Dr., New York, NY 10034  
 Founding Year: 1990  
 Jurisdiction: DPR



Garden area marked in navy blue at the center of the map.

### Zoning and Land Use

- Tax Lots
- One & Two Family Buildings
  - Multi-Family Walk-Up Buildings
  - Multi-Family Elevator Buildings
  - Mixed Residential & Commercial Buildings
  - Commercial & Office Buildings
  - Industrial & Manufacturing
  - Transportation & Utility
  - Public Facilities & Institutions
  - Open Space & Outdoor Recreation
  - Parking Facilities
  - Vacant Land
  - Other

### Zoning Districts

- Commercial Districts
- Manufacturing Districts
- Residence Districts
- Parks
- Battery Park City

Map Created: January 13, 2022  
 Map Source: zola.planning.nyc.gov

## ENDNOTES

- 1 We incorporate the [petition](#) in this supplement by reference.
- 2 See N.Y. Comp. Codes R. & Regs. tit. 6, § 617.14(g)(1).
- 3 Eric Adams, *The New Agrarian Economy: Past, Present, and Future of Urban Agriculture in New York City* 6 (2021).
- 4 U.S. Dep't of Agric., *USDA Renews People's Garden Initiative* (May 3, 2022), <https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2022/05/03/usda-renews-peoples-garden-initiative>.
- 5 See New Yorkers for Parks, *Open Space Profiles* (2021), <http://www.ny4p.org/data-and-research/research-library/open-space-profiles>.
- 6 We analyzed 453 gardens on City-owned land identified by the Department of Parks & Recreation's GreenThumb Program as of July 2020. The figure does not show 14 gardens that are in districts with over six acres of parks per 1,000 residents. Most community gardens are likely also in districts that fall below the City's goal of 2.5 acres of open space per 1,000 residents. See N.Y.C. Mayor's Office of Env't Coordination, *CEQR Technical Manual 2014*, Ch. 7: Open Spaces (2014), [https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/oec/technical-manual/07\\_Open\\_Space\\_2014.pdf](https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/oec/technical-manual/07_Open_Space_2014.pdf). Open space is "publicly or privately owned land that is publicly accessible and available for leisure, play, or sport, or is set aside for the protection and/or enhancement of the natural environment." *Id.*
- 7 See 23 U.S.C. § 138(a).
- 8 See *Glick v. Harvey*, 36 N.E.3d 640 (N.Y. 2015).
- 9 See *Monroe Cnty. Conservation Council, Inc. v. Volpe*, 472 F.2d 693, 700 (2d Cir. 1972) ("It is often an irresistible temptation to take parkland for highways, because it already belongs to the public and is usually more convenient[.]").
- 10 Mayor's Office of Food Policy, *Food Forward NYC: A 10-Year Food Policy Plan* 18 (2021).
- 11 Anna Lucente Sterling, *Asian New Yorkers Cite Food Insecurity as Top Concern, According to New Report*, Spectrum News NY1 (May 9, 2022), <https://www.ny1.com/nyc/all-boroughs/news/2022/05/08/asian-new-yorkers-cite-food-insecurity-as-top-concern--according-to-new-report>.
- 12 See Jenna DeAngelis, *Food Pantries Across Tri-State Area Seeing Greater Need Due to Pandemic, Rising Cost of Living*, CBS New York (Feb. 8, 2022), <https://www.cbsnews.com/newyork/news/new-york-new-jersey-food-pantries/>; see also Caroline Lewis & Jaclyn Jeffrey-Wilensky, *Widespread Hunger Persists Even as New York's Economy Recovers*, Gothamist (June 8, 2021), <https://gothamist.com/food/widespread-hunger-persists-even-as-new-yorks-economy-recovers>.
- 13 See Ana Swanson, *Food Prices Approach Record Highs, Threatening the World's Poorest*, N.Y. Times (Feb. 3, 2022), <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/03/business/economy/food-prices-inflation-world.html>.
- 14 City Harvest, *Feeding New York City's Children Beyond the Pandemic* 4 (2022).
- 15 See GreenThumb, GreenThumb Garden Map, <https://greenthumb.nycgovparks.org/gardensearch.php> (last accessed May 15, 2022) (showing community garden locations); Citizens' Committee for Children of New York, *Severe Rent Burden*, <https://data.cccnewyork.org/data/map/74/severe-rent-burden#74/a/3/116/62/a/a> (2019) (showing rent burden).
- 16 See County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, *2019 County Health Rankings Key Findings Report* (2019), <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/reports/2019-county-health-rankings-key-findings-report> (finding that "[a]cross counties, increases in the share of households severely cost burdened are associated with more food insecurity, more child poverty, and more people in fair or poor health").
- 17 See Cyril Josh Barker, *The Other Twin Pandemic: Homelessness and Hunger*, New York Amsterdam News (Nov. 19, 2020), <https://amsterdamnews.com/news/2020/11/19/other-twin-pandemic-homelessness-and-hunger/>.
- 18 Greta Moran, *NYC Community Gardeners Might Have New Protection in the Fight Against Development*, Civil Eats (Feb. 7, 2022), <https://civileats.com/2022/02/07/nyc-community-gardeners-might-have-new-protection-in-the-fight-against-development/>.
- 19 See Jesse McKinley et al., *The Storm Warnings Were Dire. Why Couldn't New York Be Protected?*, N.Y. Times (Sept. 3, 2021), <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/03/nyregion/nyc-ida.html>.
- 20 See Andy Newman, *2 Months of Rain in a Day and a Half: New York City Sets Records*, N.Y. Times (Aug. 23, 2021), <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/23/nyregion/nyc-rain-storm-flooding-weather.html>.
- 21 Christopher Flavelle, Anne Barnard, Brad Plumer, & Michael Kimmelman, *Overlapping Disasters Expose Harsh Climate Reality: The U.S. Is Not Ready*, N.Y. Times (Sept. 2, 2021), <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/02/climate/new-york-rain-floods-climate-change.html>.
- 22 See Andy Newman, *2 Months of Rain in a Day and a Half: New York City Sets Records*, N.Y. Times (Aug. 23, 2021), <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/23/nyregion/nyc-rain-storm-flooding-weather.html>.

- 23 See Brad Plumer, *New Yorkers Got Record Rain, and a Warning: Storms Are Packing More Punch*, N.Y. Times (Sept. 2, 2021), <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/02/climate/new-york-rain-climate-change.html>.
- 24 See John Leland, *Why an East Harlem Street is 31 Degrees Hotter Than Central Park West*, N.Y. Times (Aug. 20, 2021), <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/20/nyregion/climate-inequality-nyc.html>; see also Anne Barnard et al., *It's Going to Be a Hot Summer. It Will Be Hotter if You're Not Rich*, N.Y. Times (May 28, 2022), <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/28/nyregion/heat-waves-climate-change-inequality.html>.
- 25 See John Leland, *Why an East Harlem Street is 31 Degrees Hotter Than Central Park West*, N.Y. Times (Aug. 20, 2021), <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/20/nyregion/climate-inequality-nyc.html>.
- 26 See Amruta Nori-Sarma et al., *Association Between Ambient Heat and Risk of Emergency Department Visits for Mental Health Among US Adults, 2010 to 2019*, JAMA Psychiatry (Feb. 23, 2022).
- 27 The White House, *FACT SHEET: Biden Administration Mobilizes to Protect Workers and Communities from Extreme Heat* (2021), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/09/20/fact-sheet-biden-administration-mobilizes-to-protect-workers-and-communities-from-extreme-heat/>.
- 28 See Dana Rubinstein, *A Million More Trees for New York City: Leaders Want a Greener Canopy*, N.Y. Times (Feb. 12, 2022), <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/12/nyregion/trees-parks-nyc.html>.
- 29 Marc Heller, *Fewer Trees Means Poorer, Minority Areas are Hotter—Report*, E&E Greenwire (June 22, 2021), <https://www.abralliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Fewer-trees-means-poorer-minority-areas-are-hotter-EE-Greenwire-6-22-21.pdf>.
- 30 See Moran, *supra* note 18.
- 31 See Pleasant Village Community Garden, *Save PVCG HPD Land!*, <https://pvcghpdland.wixsite.com/savetheland/what-s-going-on>.
- 32 See Robert Blakeley, *NYU Expansion*, LaGuardia Corner Garden (Jan. 8, 2016), <http://www.laguadiacornergarden.org/wp/nyu-expansion-2/>.
- 33 See Zachary Small, *They Had a Plan to Save Their SoHo Garden. It Backfired.*, N.Y. Times (Dec. 18, 2021), <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/18/nyregion/soho-garden-rezoning.html>.
- 34 *Id.*
- 35 See N.Y. Comp. Codes R. & Regs. tit. 6, § 617.14(g)(1).
- 36 Moran, *supra* note 18.
- 37 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *Climate Change 2022: Mitigation of Climate Change*, at 8-25 (2022), <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg3/>.
- 38 See, e.g., David Kaufman, *Southern Bronx's Luxury Property Influx Threatens a Tight-Knit Community*, Financial Times (May 18, 2022), <https://www.ft.com/content/7c477987-45cb-428b-938e-3929b69f841c>.
- 39 Drew Community Garden is under the jurisdiction of the New York State Department of Transportation.
- \* Sorangel Liriano and Kara Goad conducted all interviews with community gardeners. Interviews were conducted from March 2021 to April 2022.
- \* Back cover photograph: **LaGuardia Corner Gardens**. *Photo by Sorangel Liriano*.



EARTHJUSTICE

