

**BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION  
ULURP APPLICATION NO: C 240320 PQX  
GARDEN OF YOUTH COMMUNITY GARDEN**

**DOCKET DESCRIPTION**

**IN THE MATTER OF** an application submitted by the Department of Parks and Recreation and the Department of Citywide Administrative Services, pursuant to Section 197-c of the New York City Charter, for acquisition of property located at 748 East 182<sup>nd</sup> Street (Block 3097, Lots 32 and 33) for the continued use as a community garden, Borough of The Bronx, Community District 6.

**BACKGROUND**

Approval of this application will facilitate the acquisition of two properties located at 748 East 182<sup>nd</sup> Street (Block 3097, Lots 32 and 33) by the Department of Parks and Recreation, (DPR) and the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) (the applicants). These lots are located on the southwest corner of Prospect Avenue at East 182<sup>nd</sup> Street. Lot 32 is composed of 1,750 square feet. Lot 33 is composed of 6,281 square feet. Taken together this yields a total of 8,031 square feet. This site is currently used as a fully functioning community garden and is known as the Garden of Youth Community Garden. It provides 111 feet of frontage on East 182<sup>nd</sup> Street and 70 feet of frontage on Prospect Avenue. This community garden is located in an R7-1 zone.

Currently, Lot 32 is owned by Quarry Crotona Homes, a defunct developer that has accrued debt forcing the site into foreclosure. Consequently, a public auction will be conducted on a date yet to be determined. It is the intent of the Department of Parks and Recreation to preemptively apply for the acquisition of Lot 32. If, however the site is ultimately acquired by a private sector bidder, Lot 32 will no longer be available for continued use as a community garden.

Lot 33 is currently owned by the Crotona Community Coalition (CCC). It is the intent of CCC to donate this property to the Department of Parks and Recreation. This donation however requires that a pending judgement against CCC pursuant to an accidental pedestrian fall due to a poorly maintained sidewalk be fully paid before this transfer can be consummated. A specific sum to satisfy this matter has not yet been determined.

Upon acquisition, the DPR will incorporate the Garden of Youth Community Garden (the Project Site) into its Green Thumb portfolio. This will facilitate upgrades to the garden, including new water resources, ground hydrant, a fence, sidewalk repair and soil remediation. No changes will be made to any of the structures currently located within the garden.

The Garden of Youth provides:

- Growing plots for 13 members
- Conducts youth education programming
- Offers free freshly grown produce to neighboring families
- Produce not allocated is sold at farmer's markets

Local support includes:

- A \$700,000 allocation of funds provided by Councilmember Oswald Feliz for capital improvements to the garden
- Mary Mitchell Center
- Green Thumb
- New York Botanical Garden
- New York Compost Project
- Additional corporate partners and volunteers
- La Familia Verde-a coalition of five community gardens in The Bronx

Existing development of the surrounding community is typified by low rise, multi unit residences and one, and two family homes. Retail activity is typified by modest size bodegas and other similar sized community serving facilities. This site is also located within a FRESH Zone. Public School 34 is located two blocks north of the Garden of Youth Community Garden.

Access to public transportation includes the BX9, BX17 and BX19 Subway access is allocated approximately one mile from the site at the West Farms Square-East Tremont Avenue station or the East 180<sup>th</sup> Street station of the #2 and #5 trains.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND ULURP CERTIFICATION**

This application has been reviewed pursuant to CEQR and SEQRA and received a Negative Declaration. The City Planning Commission certified this application as complete on May 13, 2024.

## **COMMUNITY BOARD PUBLIC HEARING**

Bronx Community Board #6 held a public hearing on this application on June 12, 2024. A vote unanimously recommending approval of this application was 22 in favor, zero opposed and zero abstaining.

## **BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S PUBLIC HEARING**

A virtual public hearing was convened by the Bronx Borough President on July 9, 2024. Representatives of the applicant were present and spoke in favor of this application. No members of the public offered testimony and the hearing was closed.

## **BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION**

It is with great enthusiasm that I offer my endorsement of this application. Community gardens are a vital part of inner-city neighborhoods. They offer green space for quiet relaxation, places where folks can grow crops for a healthy diet, opportunities for our youth to witness the miracle of nature and where migratory birds can find sanctuary. A community garden is also where neighbors become friends. These are but some of the benefits the Garden of Youth Community Garden offers this Belmont community.

I of course recognize that the Garden of Youth has functioned as a community garden for many years on property owned by the Crotona Community Coalition (CCC). As this garden will now become part of the Department of Parks and Recreation's Green Thumb program, community residents can rest assured that their garden will remain as a permanent part of their neighborhood.

I recommend approval of this application.