



Joint Statement of Support for Saving Elizabeth Street Garden as a Conservation Land Trust

[New York, NY] - NY State Senator Brian Kavanagh, NY State Senator Brad Hoylman, Assemblymember Deborah J. Glick, and Former City Councilmember & retired NYS Supreme Court Justice Kathryn Freed join Elizabeth Street Garden, Battery Park City Neighborhood Association, Bowery Alliance of Neighbors, Brooklyn Queens Land Trust, Coalition to Protect Chinatown & LES, Coalition to Stop Sunnyside Yards, Earth Celebrations, East River Park Action, Green Guerillas, iDig2Learn, INSIDE OUT, Inwood Preservation, JUDD Foundation, L.U.N.G.S., M.A.G.I.C., Make Music New York, Movement To Protect The People, Moving Forward Unidos, Museum of Reclaimed Urban Space, National Lawyers Guild NYC, NYCCGC, Pathway to Paris, Preserve Our Brooklyn Neighborhoods, Sierra Club NYC, SoHo Alliance, THINK! Chinatown, The Christina Alliance, The Cultural Landscape Foundation, TIME'S UP, Voice of Gowanus, and Warriors in The Garden in issuing a joint statement in support of protecting & preserving Elizabeth Street Garden as a Conservation Land Trust

Elizabeth Street Garden is a unique community sculpture garden cherished by many people from the surrounding neighborhood as well as from around the city and the world. The volunteer-based nonprofit of the same name manages the space, offering many free public events for the community throughout the year including, wellness programs, live music & poetry, movie screenings, and educational events for the local public schools.

Despite wide support from residents, local organizations, local representatives, and the community board, the City has continued its attempt to destroy the garden in order to construct 123 units of senior affordable housing, luxury retail, and office space for the developer partner.

We recognize the need for affordable housing and support the development of more affordable housing at an alternative city-owned site at Hudson and Clarkson Streets in the same Community board district where up to five times as much senior housing can be built without destroying Elizabeth Street Garden, which exists in a neighborhood already underserved in terms of public open space. This solution achieves more housing and more green space and neither at the expense of one another.

Preserving Elizabeth Street Garden as a Conservation Land Trust is the best, most cost-effective way to preserve the garden in its entirety as a public community green space for all. Elizabeth Street Garden (ESG) already fulfills all of the functions of a Conservation Land Trust including keeping the garden open to the public, providing public programs, and managing all garden maintenance and expenses. All of this is provided as a public amenity at no cost to the city whatsoever.

As a Conservation Land Trust, the organization would require no City funding in order to continue and expand upon the garden's operations; including public programs and open hours. While there are alternative methods for preserving the garden, such as transferring the land to NYC Parks Department or under the GreenThumb program, continuing to operate the garden independently would save these agencies funds and resources that could be better utilized with other green spaces across the district.

Ensuring that all of the unique statuary and architectural elements of the garden remain maintained and on display for the community is a crucial element to preserving the garden in its entirety. Preserving the garden as a Conservation Land Trust would ensure that all of the unique qualities remain in the garden while maintaining community governance over the space. The unique qualities of the garden are what have inspired so many people to organize so passionately to protect this beloved community space. For all these reasons, we urge the Community Board to stand with the garden community and support the plan to preserve Elizabeth Street Garden in its entirety as a Conservation Land Trust. Read the full report here: <https://www.elizabethstreetgarden.com/clt>