

GALE A. BREWER
COUNCIL MEMBER, DISTRICT 6
MANHATTAN

DISTRICT OFFICE
563 COLUMBUS AVENUE, AT 87TH STREET
NEW YORK, NY 10024
(212) 873-0282
FAX (212) 873-0279

CITY HALL OFFICE
250 BROADWAY, ROOM 1744
NEW YORK, NY 10007
(212) 788-6975
FAX (212) 513-7717

gale.brewer@council.nyc.ny.us
www.nycouncil.info



THE COUNCIL
OF
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

CHAIR
TECHNOLOGY IN GOVERNMENT

COMMITTEES

AGING

FINANCE

GENERAL WELFARE

HIGHER EDUCATION

MENTAL HEALTH, MENTAL RETARDATION,
ALCOHOLISM, DRUG ABUSE & DISABILITY SERVICES

OVERSIGHT & INVESTIGATIONS

WATERFRONTS

February 12, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

As a City Council Member since 2002 representing the Upper West Side and Clinton, I have been dedicated to responding to the needs of our community and to improving the quality of life and the environment. I am writing to urge you to support LANDMARK WEST!'s innovative environmental study, analyzing the environmental benefits that oft-overlooked open spaces convey to the New York City urban fabric.

LANDMARK WEST!, a community-based not for profit advocacy group dedicated to the preservation of the architectural heritage and the environment on the Upper West Side, is spearheading this initiative, in partnership with NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies and The CUNY Institute for Sustainable Cities. This project seeks to quantify the environmental value of open spaces and vegetation planted in the combined rear yards behind many rows of brownstones on the Upper West Side, covering roughly 115 acres of land - 14% the size of Central Park!

These hidden backyards offer a range of environmental benefits, such as reducing the urban heat island effect, removing air pollution and slowing rainwater drainage, easing the burden on our existing water treatment infrastructure. This project will complement existing analyses of public open spaces and vegetation such as Mayor Bloomberg's NYC PLANYC green initiative, and focuses on privately owned open spaces not previously studied.

One might ask why a Council Member is supporting a study of privately owned open space, but we know that the environment does not recognize building ownership-the entire community either benefits or suffers from how these surviving open spaces are treated. We also know that findings from this study will add to our understanding of the potential environmental benefits of open spaces in other, less affluent areas of the City, that are similarly configured with brownstone-lined streets with their still-undeveloped backyards.

LW! also plans to develop a handbook that will translate the scientific data that is gathered into an easily accessible guide for residents and business owners, putting usable information into the hands of Upper West Siders who wish to enhance the environmental benefits of even small pieces of land.

I hope that you will be able to assist with securing funding for this important project to create a basis for more informed preservation and environmental decision- and policy-making.

Sincerely,

Gale A. Brewer
Gale A. Brewer