

OUR YEAR IN 2014



596
ACRES

Community Land Access Advocates

WE ARE NEW YORK'S COMMUNITY LAND ACCESS ADVOCATES.

**WE CONNECT NEIGHBORS IN NEW YORK CITY
WITH THE INFORMATION THEY NEED TO TAKE
PART IN SHAPING THE URBAN LANDSCAPE.**

**WE UNLOCK THE INFORMATION THAT
UNLOCKS THE GATES.**



(Above) Faith hanging up a sign on a vacant lot in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn
(Right) Group land-access-problem-solving in East New York at our general meeting



OUR PROCESS

We gather data about NYC's vacant land.

We post signs directly on the fences surrounding vacant lots around the city.

Community members see the signs and get in touch with us. Our website and community organizer connects them with other neighbors who have inquired about the same site.

We provide a variety of tools that support grassroots campaigns to turn empty lots into something wonderful.



(Above, Left and Below) Before and after of A Small Green Patch. 348 Bergen Street, Brooklyn Block 389 Lot 27



**WITH OUR SUPPORT,
COMMUNITIES ARE TURNING
VACANT PUBLIC LAND INTO
JOYFUL PUBLIC SPACE.**

“596 Acres is basically a selfless entity - it empowers others to follow through on an idea for the better use of public space in their neighborhood, supports them through the process of getting started and then steps aside to let the community own & develop what they have started. Awesome!”

- Neil Richardson, Staff Member at Sustainable Works, City University of New York; Warsoff Wilds Organizer, Brooklyn Block 1718 lot 15



Community gardeners at 462 Halsey
Community Garden Opening, Brooklyn
Block 1664 lot 40

11 NEW COMMUNITY SPACES IN 2014!

WHERE IN 2013 THERE WERE VACANT LOTS, THERE ARE NOW OVER 3 ACRES OF BUDDING PARKS, GARDENS, GATHERING SPACES, AND SITES OF COMMUNITY BUILDING.



- 1 1278 Myrtle Avenue
- 2 Glenmore Grows
- 3 Ashford Variety Garden
- 4 Ashford Teaching Garden
- 5 Chestnut Street Community Garden
- 6 Harlem Valley Garden
- 7 Electric Ladybug Harlem Serenity Garden
- 8 Mandela Park
- 9 Green Space on 4th
- 10 Smiling Hogshead Ranch
- 11 Q Gardens

3.121579 ACRES

of new community space in 2014.

7.029 ACRES

of new community space to date.

596 ACRES

of estimated total vacant public land in NYC (bigger than Prospect Park!)

29 NEW SITES

on 46 lots in 2011-2014. That's bigger than Union Square Park!

Dozens more spaces have made progress on their campaigns with our guidance and will be official in the coming months.

We secured the MTA's approval plans for a pocket park in East New York on the roof of the A train tunnel (part of Block 4206, lot 1). The park is designed by pro bono architect Wendy Andringa of GreenLab Studio, in collaboration with Grain Collective & will be run by the Bangladeshi American Community Development and Youth Service (BACDYS).

We helped neighbors near a vacant MTA-owned lot (Brooklyn Block 5078, lot 32; the roof of the Q train Church Avenue station!) organize themselves into a group and join the Brooklyn Queens Land Trust (BQLT). BQLT will be signing a lease any day now with the MTA so that neighbors can access the space and provide a license to the Q Gardeners."

"It's not an organization that goes out and builds space on its own. The best part is that its bringing awareness to people in the hood, empowering them, telling them what they can do, giving them tools to actually do it..."

- Shatia Strother, Co-Founder of 462 Halsey Community Garden, Brooklyn Block 1664 lot 40

\$150,000+

raised independently for programming and development.



(LEFT)

Ribbon Cutting at Keap Fourth Community Garden June 2014. Brooklyn Block 2436 lots 20 & 120 (planned as "Open Space" in the Southside Urban Renewal plan)

We work with community, government and non-profit partners in NYC to increase community awareness and access to vacant land resources.

AT NYC'S COMMUNITY BOARD MEETINGS

Thanks to a grant from the New York Community Trust, in summer 2014 we visited the seven community boards with the greatest amount of vacant public land in the city. We educated board members about the land in their districts, the process for accessing the city's land, and the neighborhood groups poised to seek letters of support from them in the near future.

Along the way we motivated board members to become organizers. We're assured that - thanks to a newly shared understanding of how the process works - neighborhood groups will have an easier time working with their community boards to create new and exciting gardens, parks, or open space.



Community Board Meeting in Queens District 14



Anthony Mohen (**Right**), Mohen & Segal LLP, representing Merrick Marsden Neighborhood Association in transfer of block association property acquired in 1967 to the Brooklyn Queens Land Trust for permanent protection

TEAMING UP WITH NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

We partnered with students, scholars and a variety of NYC organizations to successfully advocate for open access to MAP PLUTO, a source of important data on NYC land that was previously only made available by the city for \$3000 per year.

We worked with the local community to advocate for significant community control in the development of 81 acres of the Rockaway waterfront, part of a designated Urban Renewal Area. With our support local groups were able to contract directly with the development team for local input. This process has resulted in the inclusion of a Community Land Trust as an ultimate disposition for the property in planning documents; we continue to work with local organizations to make these plans a reality.

We helped save two neighborhood spaces that have been stewarded for generations by neighborhood associations by facilitating their transfer to the Brooklyn Queens Land Trust for preservation in perpetuity through our law firm partner Mohen & Segal LLC: Merrick Marsden Neighborhood Association (January 2014) & 1100 Bergen (projected December 2014/January 2015).



Lot labeling in Weeksville, Brooklyn

SELECTED CONFERENCES & PRESENTATIONS IN 2014

2014 Municipal Art Society Summit for New York City

Growing Power Conference 2014 (Milwaukee)

Secure Lands for Urban Agriculture, a regional symposium organized by Equity Trust (Amherst, MA)

"Urban data: From fetish object to social object" (London School of Economics: Cities)

Turning Vacant Acres into Community Resources (New School, NYC)

Urban Reviewer Residency with Spontaneous Interventions on Governor's Island (NYC)

"Solving Urban Land Use Problems in the 21st Century," NYC Land Use Summit at NYU

#GetOnTheMap! Community Mapping workshop with the People's Platform (Detroit)

Testified before City Council at Vacant Property Oversight hearing and #OpenFOIL hearing

NEW COMMUNITY LAND ACCESS TOOLS

INTERACTIVES

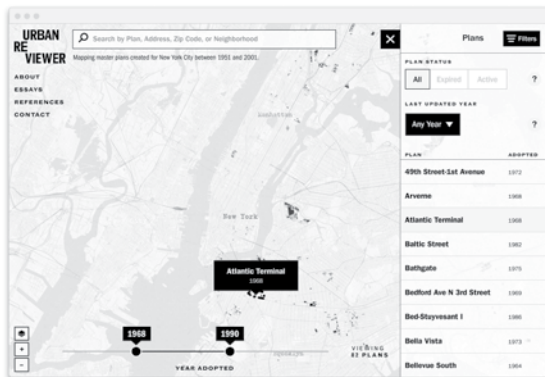


We analyzed and made vacant municipal land data available online for Staten Island; the City is all mapped now!



With the support of the Sunlight Foundation, updated our online mapping and organizing tool for NYC: livinglotsnyc.org. Now you can search and create reports by council district and community board! And so much more!

We mapped the history of Urban Renewal Planning in NYC1949 - present, at urbanreviewer.org (a Planetizen Top Ten Website of 2014 & CartoDB Map of the Week) and published the Urban Reviewer Reader. Designed with Partner & Partners.



PUBLICATIONS



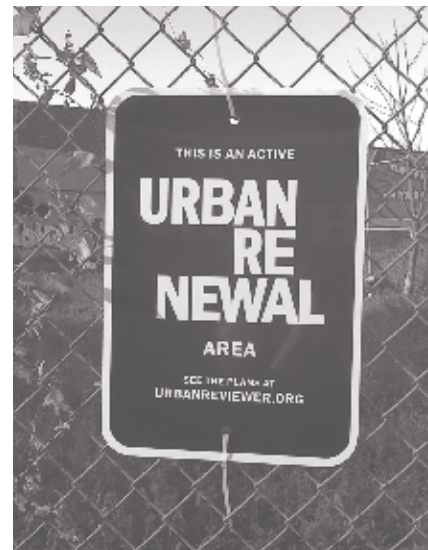
We wrote, published, and distributed over 7,000 copies of the New York City Advocate's Guide to Community Land Access, with design and illustrations by MANY Design and printing funded by Occuprint.



We distributed Gracias Por Guiarme, a handmade book-documentary illustrating different personal perspectives on communal land ownership in modern Mexico. Joint publication of 596 Acres and contorno, in English & Spanish. Drawings by Daniel Eizirik. Text by Paula Z. Segal.

SIGNS

We created signs for vacant lots and urban renewal areas in collaboration with Partner & Partners. Urban Renewal Area Signs funded by a MACKTEZ stipend award.



COMMUNITY LAND ACCESS ADVOCACY NETWORK

We are part of an active network of land access facilitators who cross-pollinate each other's work. We engage in an on-going discussions with our partner projects about how to make land more available to community in their cities.

- 596 Acres developed GroundedInPhilly.org with the Garden Justice Legal Initiative at the Public Interest Law Center of Philadelphia in 2013. It has been used not just to support organizing block by block, but to advocate for changes in Philadelphia land access law and policy. In 2014, we are improving the site to incorporate more data sources and improve functionality to better serve the needs of Philadelphia advocates, through grants from the Merck Family Fund and Claneil Foundation. The City of Philadelphia included this project as a "Data in Action" featurette in its own Open Data Strategic Plan: http://cityofphiladelphia.github.io/slash-data/phl_opendata_plan.pdf
- We created LivingLotsNOLA.org with the New Orleans Food and Farm Network, supported by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation Prototype Fund in 2013. Local organizations are developing strategies for using it to expand community land access in New Orleans.
- LAOpenAcres.org launched at a #FreeLotsAngeles event on December 7, 2014. We designed and developed with Community Health Councils and C-Lab. It will be stewarded by a coalition of community groups in Los Angeles. This tool particularly identifies lots eligible for the urban agriculture tax abatement program California has enabled that Los Angeles is implementing through local legislation.

BUILDING TOOLS WITH ADVOCATES IN OTHER CITIES

We support other community land access advocates by creating participatory mapping tools to support their local work. The tools we build allow advocacy organizations to turn city data into information about particular pieces of land and connect people to one another through simple social networking functions.

- GTECH Strategies, Pittsburgh PA, put out an RFP this year for the development of a tool modeled on ours!
- 3000acres, Melbourne, created a local variant of our organizing model with our consultation and have scaled it to Sydney as 2000acres.
- Love Old Trafford Lots, Old Trafford UK, started mapping opportunities for community land transformation after a visit and presentation by Paula Z. Segal of 596 Acres.
- A new coalition in Montreal is creating a local variant of our organizing model with our consultation: URBURB.



(Left) Marco Clausen, Prinzessinnengarten, Berlin, Germany; (Right) Shane Bernardo, Earthworks Detroit

SYMPOSIUM: TURNING VACANT ACRES INTO COMMUNITY RESOURCES

On April 22nd and 23rd, we co-hosted the first ever Vacant Acres Symposium, bringing together knowledgeable and passionate urban vacant land advocates to discuss land access, strategies for land tenure protection, racial and economic justice issues in access to vacant urban land, and the wide variety of urban contexts experienced by our participants from cities around the world.

NEW YORK STATE COALITION OF COMMUNITY GARDEN STAKEHOLDERS

In 2014, 596 Acres initiated a coalition with community garden stakeholders from across New York State. We successfully advocated for state legislation creating a Community Garden Task Force and expand the responsibilities of the Office of Community Gardens. Governor Cuomo sent us the pen he used to sign the bill into law. Now we're continuing the momentum with the same statewide coalition to make sure that the Department of Agriculture and Markets follows through!

"The symposium was truly a transformative experience...This work that we are all engaged in can be extraordinarily difficult. ...I have felt very isolated and alone in my efforts. I have often felt the challenges too great. After the conference I now know I have peers in far-flung corners of the world... to turn to for advice, guidance, wisdom and support."

- Bridget Kelly, Groundspeakers/Land Trust for Louisiana, New Orleans, LA, USA



Gaëlle Janvier, at far left, speaking on a panel at the Vacant Acres Symposium. Alternatives/URBURB, Montreal, Canada.

SUPPORT FOR OUR WORK

SUPPORT FOR OUR NYC COMMUNITY LAND ACCESS PROGRAM

Aeolian Ride, supported by Blazing Saddles Bike Rentals and NY Waterway

The Awesome Foundation, NYC Chapter

Citizen's Committee for New York City
Clif Bar Family Foundation

FEAST (Funding Emerging Art with Sustainable Tactics) Brooklyn

Fund For the City of New York

Occuprint

The Sunlight Foundation
OpenGov Grant

New York City Venture
Philanthropy Fund

New York Community Trust

Norcross Wildlife Foundation

NextDoorganics Local Food Fund

Small Planet Fund

GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

FY2015 Expense funding from Councilmembers Steve Levin (District 33), Antonio Reynoso (District 34), Robert Cornegy (District 36) & Brad Lander (District 39)

VACANT ACRES SYMPOSIUM SUPPORT

The New School Environmental
Studies Department

Tishman Environment
and Design Center

The Small Planet Fund

The Southwest Foundation

URBANREVIEWER.ORG

Macktez Inc.

SmartSign, Inc.

SUPPORT FOR LIVING LOTS NOLA

John S. and James L. Knight
Foundation Prototype Fund

SUPPORT FOR LA OPEN ACRES

Goldhirsh Foundation
LA2050 Competition

MAPPING MATTERS GALA TO SUPPORT NYC COMMUNITY LAND ACCESS PROJECT SPONSORS

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Suzanne Chilcote

Hannah Edmunds Gardens

MapZen

Nextdoorganics

SmartSign, Inc.

Etsy

David Smiley

Succulent Studios

IN-KIND DONATIONS

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Consumata Sonidera

Flying Pigs Farm

Foragers City Grocer

Galapagos Art Space

Gnarly Vines

Greene Grape Provisions

J MacDonald

Lagunitas

McClure's

The Meat Hook

Chef Erika Nakamura

One Girl Cookies

Raven & Crow

Duke Riley and East River Tattoos

Sahadi's

The Tarot Society

Tofurky

Trader Joe's

Yonkers Brewing Company

Z Crackers

RAFFLE DONATIONS

Ben & Jerry's

Brooklyn Larder

Four and Twenty Blackbirds

Mast Brothers Chocolate

New York Giants

NYC Foodscape

Public Ad Campaign

RedBeard Bikes

Shake Shack

FEATURED SPEAKERS

Agnes Denes

Councilmember Steve Levin

(District 33)

Councilmember Antonio Reynoso

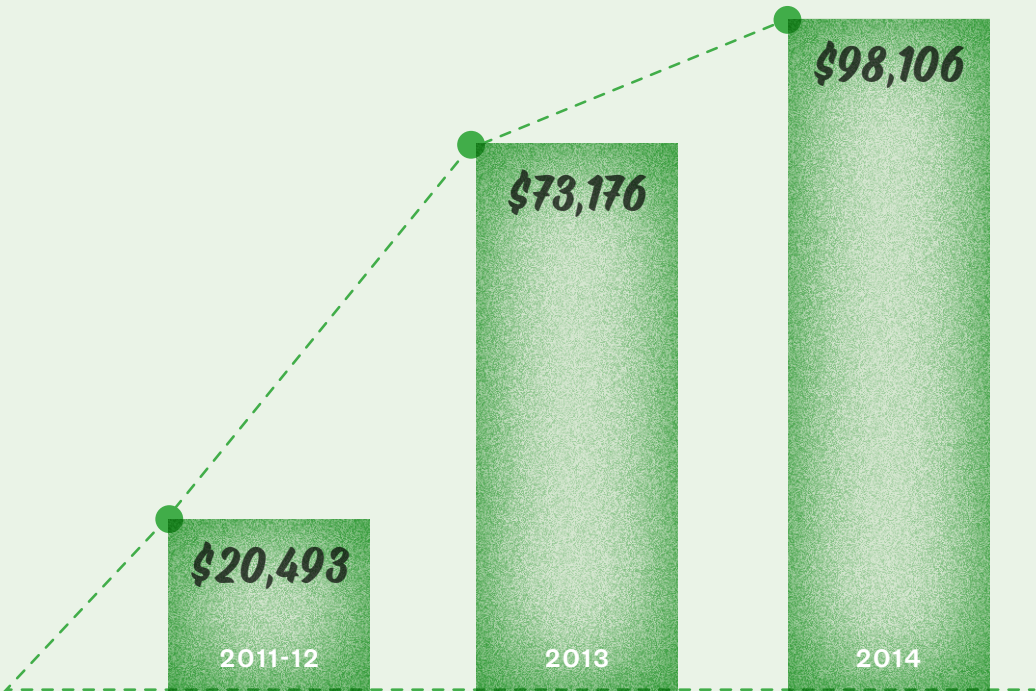
(District 34)



REVENUE	2011-12*	2013	2014
Individuals	\$8,918	\$14,101	\$18,630
Foundations	\$6,500	\$40,000	\$43,500
Government	\$4,000	-	-
Earned	\$1,075	\$19,074	\$35,976
TOTAL	\$20,493	\$73,176	\$98,106

EXPENSES	2011-12*	2013	2014
Personnel	\$6,260	\$35,799	\$75,776
OTPS	\$5,933	\$7,054	\$16,880
Administrative Costs/ FCNY Service Fee (9%)	N/A*	\$3,857	Waived!
TOTAL	\$12,193	\$46,701	\$92,656

*We started as a fiscally sponsored project of IOBY, Inc.



OUR TEAM

STAFF



Paula Z. Segal
Executive Director & Legal
Director of NYC Community
Land Access Program



Eric Brelsford
Lead Software Developer
and Data Analyst



Mary Elizabeth Prall
Organizer for the NYC
Land Access Program

2014 INTERNS AND FELLOWS

- Mary Berecka, Spring/Summer Intern
- Matthew DelSesto, Research Fellow
- Chandni Navalkha, Fall/Winter Intern
- Marissa Provenza, Fall/Winter Intern
- Faith Titilawo, Summer East New York Farms! Extern
- Andrew Tucker, Development Associate
- Merran Swartwood, Urban Reviewer Research Fellow
- Charles Chawalko, Urban Reviewer Digital Cartographer

596 Acres is a Partner Project of the
Fund for the City of New York.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Liz Barry, Public Laboratory for Open Technology and Science and TreeKit co-founder
- Eric Brelsford, 596 Acres Lead Software Developer and Data Analyst
- Patrick Foster, Attorney, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
- Moses Gates, Pratt Institute demography professor
- Kristin Booth Glen, former CUNY Law School Dean, retired judge from the New York County Surrogate's Court & current CUNY professor
- Rachel Dobkin, Writer and Attorney
- Paula Z. Segal, Attorney, 596 Acres Founder, Director & Lead Facilitator

ANNUAL REPORT PHOTO CREDITS

Andrea Nunez, Marco Clausen, Meg Wachter, Michael Anderson (MANY Design) and Murray Cox

ANNUAL REPORT DESIGN

Partner & Partners

29 NEW COMMUNITY SPACES AND COUNTING. USING OPEN DATA TO OPEN FENCES.

Vinegar Hill Community Garden (Brooklyn)
St. Nicholas Miracle Garden (Harlem, Manhattan)
South Brooklyn Children's Garden (Red Hook, Brooklyn)
Smiling Hogshead Ranch (Long Island City, Queens)
Siempre Verde Garden (Lower East Side, Manhattan)
Saratoga Community Garden (Weeksville/Ocean Hill, Brooklyn)
Q Garden (Ditmas, Brooklyn)
Pirate's Cove Community Garden (Red Hook, Brooklyn)
Patchen Community Square (Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn)
Myrtle Village Green (Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn)
Mindfully Living Community Garden (Coney Island, Brooklyn)
Mandela Park (Harlem, Manhattan)
La Casita Verde (Southside Williamsburg, Brooklyn)
Keap Fourth Community Garden (Southside Williamsburg, Brooklyn)
Java Street Community Garden (Greenpoint, Brooklyn)
Harlem Valley Garden (Manhattan)
Green Space Native Plant Garden on 4th Avenue (Gowanus, Brooklyn)
Grand Street Community Garden (Southside Williamsburg, Brooklyn)
Glenmore Grows (Cypress Hills, Brooklyn)
Evergreen Lots (EL) Garden (Bushwick, Brooklyn)
Electric Ladybug Harlem Serenity Garden (Harlem, Manhattan)
Chestnut Street Community Garden (Cypress Hills, Brooklyn)
Beach 45th Street Farm (Rockaway, Queens)
Ashford Variety Garden (Cypress Hills, Brooklyn)
Ashford Teaching Garden (Cypress Hills, Brooklyn)
A Small Green Patch (Gowanus, Brooklyn)
61 Franklin Community Garden (Greenpoint, Brooklyn)
462 Halsey Community Garden (Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn)
1278 Myrtle Avenue (Bushwick, Brooklyn)
100 Quincy Community Garden (Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn)



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LivingLotsNYC.org