



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas K. Duane

Ensuring the Protection of Our Precious Tree Pit Gardens

THOMAS K. DUANE August 24, 2012

In late July, constituents reached out to my office to report that a local community gardener's landscaped tree pits in the pedestrian islands at 8th Avenue and West 12th Street had been totally removed without warning as part of an on-street project. My staff quickly identified the agency responsible for the project—the New York City Department of Design and Construction (DDC)—and wrote to its commissioner to inform him of the agreement with the City's Departments of Transportation and Parks & Recreation that I helped to broker enabling area residents to safely and responsibly assume stewardship over their local tree pits. I requested that the agency make itself aware of community-tended bike lane tree pits within all of its project boundaries, make best efforts to avoid removing them, and provide as much notice as possible to local Community Boards and elected officials if it appears that such green spaces will have to be removed so that a project can be completed. I also respectfully asked that the agency apologize to the gardener who had invested significant time and money in tending the tree pits that were removed. Upon receipt of my letter, DDC promptly wrote a letter of apology to the gardener and committed to communicating any future plans that may affect green spaces within project limits to the community. I am grateful not only to this gardener, but to all community gardeners, who contribute their own time, energy and money to the beautification of our neighborhoods, and I appreciate DDC's responsiveness to my requests following this unfortunate incident