

# Jackson Heights' Dunningham Triangle to be revamped

By Alexa Altman

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THE COURIER/Photo by Alexa Altman

Members of the 82nd Street Partnership and the Partnership for Parks gathered at Dunningham Triangle on Friday, August 24 for some preliminary beautification.

Jackson Heights' Dunningham Triangle is blossoming, sprouting with seeds planted by local residents.

The 82nd Street Partnership united with the Partnership for Parks — a subdivision of the City Parks Foundation — to revamp a 2,000-square-foot piece of land in the heart of Jackson Heights, assisted by suggestions from citizens.

“We looked at Dunningham Triangle and saw a lot of potential for it to be a great common gathering space,” said Seth Taylor of the 82nd Street Partnership, a group that focuses on beautification and advocacy throughout the neighborhood.

At an all-day event on Friday, August 24, volunteers collected input from local stakeholders, who filled out surveys about what they would like to see happen to Dunningham Triangle. Passers-by filled out questionnaires and surveys, writing their hopes for the tiny space on triangle-shaped cards.

Four-year-old Elizabeth from Jackson Heights wants Dunningham Triangle to have chairs and benches to relax in, as well as music events for kids and toys to play with.

Taylor believes that despite the park's small size, it can have a major impact. Jackson Heights was ranked second to last in park space out of the 51 council districts citywide in a New Yorkers for Parks study published in 2009.

“One of people’s frustrations is that there’s nowhere to sit outside,” said Taylor. “We’re trying to fix that a bit. This is a great neighborhood for people watching but there’s nowhere to do that.”

Taylor said the space could hold anything from language classes to dance lessons.

“The community will benefit because this is going to provide a really nice amenity,” said Taylor. “I think if the community is involved in the vision of the space, it becomes more of a valued space.”

Jason Schwartz, director of the Partnerships for Parks — an organization that helps nearly 600 groups build outdoor spaces annually — said the \$200,000 Jackson Heights project is part of a larger green initiative for Jackson Heights that also includes Department of Transportation (DOT) instated pedestrian plazas.

“The work we do is all about community engagement,” said Schwartz. “The more people who come together and talk about how the space they have can be the most maximized will help.”

The newly revitalized Dunningham Triangle is expected to be up and running by next summer.