

# THE REAL DEAL

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<http://therealdeal.com/newyork/articles/developers-like-douglaston-development-rockrose-development-and-alexandria-real-estate-equities-use-vacant-lots-for-farms-flea-markets-and-food-trucks>

## NYC developers use vacant lots for "neighborhood building"



From left: Douglaston Development Chairman Jeffrey Levine (top), Patricia Dunphy, senior vice president of Rockrose Development (bottom left), the Riverpark farm, the DeKalb Market and the Brooklyn Flea

With [more than 600 stalled construction sites](#) currently blighting the city thanks to the recession, developers have begun renting out their [vacant lots](#), sometimes free of charge, to ventures that can lure foot traffic to the area. According to the New York Times, the developers hope the increased traffic will improve the neighborhood -- and sales and leasing figures -- in advance of their projects breaking ground.

For example, Alexandria Real Estate Equities [has fostered a farm](#) on the stalled site of the second [Alexandria Center for Life Science](#) tower off the East River. Chef Tom Colicchio's adjacent restaurant Riverpark uses produce from the farm, a set-up that has attracted interest to what would otherwise be a construction fence.

Similarly, the Dekalb Market in Downtown Brooklyn has brought crowds eager to shop to the site where [City Point](#), a massive retail and housing project, will be erected.

Rockrose Development has agreed to let food trucks and the host of [weekend pool parties](#) [occupy vacant lots](#) near Court Square in Queens for no cost. "What we're really doing is neighborhood building," said Patricia Dunphy, a senior vice president at the firm. "The young people that these kinds of things attract are going to be our target group."

That's already proven to be a winning strategy for Douglaston Development, which brought the Brooklyn Flea and Smorgasburg markets to a vacant lot adjacent to [the Edge condominium](#) in Williamsburg where a third tower is planned. The markets attracted as many as 15,000 people per day, and helped produce [this year's blistering sales pace](#), Douglaston Chairman [Jeffrey Levine](#) said. [\[NYT\]](#)