



## **BROOKLYN'S DEVELOPMENT BOOM HAS BROUGHT A PROBLEM: LOTS OF RATS**

By Jeanine Ramirez | December 19, 2017 @12:06 AM

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Homeowners throughout Prospect Heights have black boxes in their front yards — they're rat traps.

Evidence of the roaming rodents is all over the neighborhood: by the entrance to a house — rat droppings. In a garden — burrows. Behind a fence — a dead rat. Residents say the rats overrun the neighborhood at night.

"If I'm out walking with my grandchild, there can be a parade of four or five rats just crossing in front of me right here on Dean Street," Prospect Heights resident Elaine Weinstein said.

"They cut across my yard at night time," Prospect Heights resident Vanessa Londono said. "I can't even let my dog out when it gets dark, because they're bigger than my dog,"

Some homeowners are taking matters into their own hands. "I have an exterminator who comes, but it's really, really difficult," Kathy Weil said. "You fill up one hole and they come and make a hole someplace else."

On Monday, a group of residents took Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams on a tour of the neighborhood's rat problem.

They said the problem has expanded beyond Prospect Heights to Park Slope and Fort Greene. They blame the surge in construction across the area, especially the Atlantic Yards project.

"Brooklyn has been experiencing an amazing boom in construction," Adams said. "We're digging, we are disturbing underground, where many rats have lived for so many years, and now they are coming out."

Some homeowners are taking extreme measures, paving over their front yards and removing gardens to deny rats any living space.

"We removed all our ivy — ivy we had there for 30 years," Park Slope resident Steve Ettlinger said. "We had to take out the ivy because the rats hide under the big leaves."

Residents say a temporary solution is asking neighbors not to put their garbage out the night before, but rather the morning of sanitation pickup.

But they really want a permanent solution, and they're hoping the borough president can pressure developers doing work in the neighborhood.

"We need the construction companies and the developers to bait their locations so that the rats don't come into our community, into our parks, in front of our children," Weinstein said.

Some say they would rather walk in the middle of the street at night than risk running into a rat on the sidewalk.