



**Hearing before the New York City Council
Committee on Finance jointly with the Committee on Parks & Recreation
Oversight: Fiscal Year 2017 Executive Budget
May 20, 2016
Testimony By: Mitchell J. Silver, FAICP, Commissioner**

Good morning, City Council Finance Committee Chair Julissa Ferreras, City Council Parks Committee Chair Mark Levine and members of the Council Finance and Parks Committees. I am Mitchell Silver, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation. I am joined here today by a number of our senior staff. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to discuss the Fiscal Year 2017 Executive Budget for NYC Parks.

I'd like to begin by providing a brief overview about NYC Parks. We are the steward of over 30,000 acres of city parkland— 14 percent of New York City's land mass – including 10,000 acres of natural areas. We oversee nearly 4,500 individual properties, ranging from parks and playgrounds to community gardens and Greenstreets. We operate more than 800 athletic fields and nearly 1,000 playgrounds, 67 public pools, 51 recreation facilities, 15 nature centers and 14 miles of public beaches. There are currently 524 active capital contracts for Parks improvement projects, including 184 in design, 177 in procurement and 163 in construction. Most importantly, our parks enjoy over 130 million visits a year, from New Yorkers and others from around the world.

Thanks to the leadership of Mayor de Blasio and our strong partnership with the City Council, New York City continues to make significant investments in our parks and open spaces. Embodied by our "Framework for an Equitable Future," NYC Parks is focused on key strategic initiatives and outcome-oriented goals:

We're working to make our parks **Cleaner & Safer**, reflecting that our mission is not simply maintaining our parks and green spaces, but **Caring** for them as well.

We continue to improve and refine our Capital and Operations processes, increasing efficiency and delivering services that are **Smarter & Faster** and achieved through **Innovation**.

We are helping New Yorkers live **Greener & Healthier** lifestyles by creating and improving our open spaces through targeted **Placemaking** efforts.

And we're undertaking all of these efforts with a specific mission in mind: increase access to parks for all New Yorkers in a **Fair & Focused** manner that reflects our dedication to **Equity**.

The Mayor's Executive Budget for Fiscal Year 2017 reflects these priorities, providing NYC Parks with an operating expense budget of \$480 million, a \$25 million increase from the Fiscal Year 2016 Adopted Budget. The Executive 4-Year Capital Plan provides a total Parks Capital budget of \$2.9 billion, with \$417 million in Mayoral funding for approved new capital needs. This budget demonstrates the Mayor's continued strong commitment to improving our city's parks and maintaining the state of good repair for our many park properties. For this reason, I'm very excited to be here today to discuss the Fiscal Year 2017 Executive Budget in



greater detail, and provide some additional updates about the state of our park system.

Our dedicated maintenance and operations staff do their best to keep our parks in the best condition possible. Each of these individual properties requires targeted maintenance, and we are striving to truly “care” for our parks and green spaces, with all of the dedication and investment that the word “**Caring**” implies. We are delighted that New Yorkers and visitors from around the world are visiting our parks in great numbers, but we are mindful of the challenges this can create for the maintenance and operations of our parks. This administration is committed to keeping our parks clean and exploring new approaches to achieve that goal.

For example, as we’ve discussed in previous hearings, after observing that high-destination parks were receiving increased usage on weekends, resulting in increased trash, we instituted new weekend cleaning schedules for our maintenance crews to target these hot spots for picnicking, sports and other activities. As we head into the summer peak season, our beaches and pools open for operations, drawing millions of visitors, and we also see increased levels of usage at our other parks around the city, due to the longer daylight hours and pleasant weather. One traditional challenge that we face during the peak summer season is managing the redeployment of Parks employees that “step up” to take on seasonal positions at beaches and pools, to help manage the various operational and maintenance needs. In the past, this has been something of a strain on agency resources, in light of longer daylight hours and increased usage at other park properties outside of our beaches and pools.

That is why I’m very pleased to highlight that the Mayor’s Fiscal Year 2017 Executive Budget includes \$12 million in baseline funding for increasing our peak seasonal staffing levels, offering one-for-one replacement for employees that take on higher-level seasonal positions at our beaches and pools. This seasonal staffing increase will ensure that our park districts retain adequate supervision and staff with proper skills to manage our parks and playgrounds throughout the peak season.

As a further benefit, hiring additional seasonal crew chiefs will enable us to implement a smaller crew configuration, averaging a 5:1 ratio, resulting in maintenance crews that are easier to manage and more efficient. We will also be able to provide a second shift of coverage, allowing us to keep our comfort stations open longer during the day, and provide more maintenance coverage on the weekends, when families are out barbecuing and enjoying our parks.

This approach to working **Smarter & Faster** through **Innovation** is reflected in every aspect of the agency’s operations, and the Mayor’s Executive Budget demonstrates this strong commitment through increased strategic investment. We need to manage our resources in the most efficient and thoughtful manner, which is why we are committed to exploring new ideas and technological approaches. Our Innovation & Performance Management division has made great strides in this direction. We’re especially pleased that the Executive Budget includes funding for a new Data Analytics team, which will apply advanced data analysis and modeling methods to examine our park cleaning and maintenance methods, including cleaning schedules, staff allocation, work order procedures, as well as security measures and the optimal use of our agency’s vehicle fleet.



We are also pleased to announce that the Executive Budget includes \$5.7 million in capital funding to establish a new regional hub for our mobile maintenance crews in Queens, as recommended by Agency Operations analysis conducted via our “Ops.21” project. This will help provide greater coverage throughout Queens to help keep local parks cleaner, and serve as a model of efficiency that we’re adopting throughout the city.

In addition to keeping our parks clean and in good condition, we want to innovate new approaches to keep our properties in a state of good repair. NYC Parks has over 180 synthetic turf multi-use athletic fields in our portfolio, and many are nearing the end of their expected useful life of 8 to 10 years. These fields are popular and well-used, making their maintenance all the more vital. The Mayor’s Executive Budget provides \$16 million in capital funding to fully renovate the oldest synthetic turf fields in the most need of repair. The Executive Budget also provides close to \$1 million in expense funding in Fiscal Year 2017 for the creation of a Synthetic Turf Maintenance Crew, which will specifically focus on the annual grooming, maintenance and renovation of our synthetic turf fields. Our investment in these fields will now be far more productive, with the additional ability to maintain them on an on-going basis, so we can get the most out of every public dollar we spend.

We have also been incorporating this spirit of innovation into our capital process, and we have valued the City Council’s partnership, as we work to make it more streamlined and efficient. Since the beginning of this Mayoral administration, we have shaved months off the capital process.

At any given moment, there are over 500 projects in the Parks capital pipeline, either in design, undergoing the procurement process to choose a vendor for construction, or in the process of being built. This tremendous volume of projects can be a challenge, but with the help of recent Mayoral funding for additional capital design staff, we have cleared the capital backlog. Our goal moving forward is to have all newly funded projects enter into design within the same fiscal year that funding is received. To help achieve this objective, I am happy to announce that the Mayor has provided close to \$2 million dollars in baseline expense funding in the Executive Budget for an additional 20 Capital division staffers to help us continue this momentum, and help keep our projects on track when they begin construction.

As a central mission, NYC Parks is dedicated to helping New Yorkers live **Greener & Healthier** lifestyles, and the one important way we can do this is by encouraging them to get out and enjoy the city’s parks and open space. Our local community gardens, managed by our GreenThumb division, are a tremendous way for New Yorkers of all walks of life to reconnect with nature through urban farming. At the end of 2015, the City announced the biggest addition to NYC Parks’ community garden system in more than a decade, transferring thirty-four (34) interim garden sites from the Department of Housing Preservation and Development to NYC Parks for permanent assignment as GreenThumb gardens. To support this expansion and provide more resources and expertise to help make these gardens even stronger, the Mayor’s Executive Budget has allocated \$1.3 million in expanded baseline expense funding for additional GreenThumb staff, as well as \$795,000 in capital funding for water supply infrastructure improvements.



Working for a greener New York also means it is critical to invest in Parks' living assets - our street trees, landscaped park trees, forests and wetlands - as they provide important benefits that improve the lives of everyday New Yorkers. These benefits include increasing property values, absorbing storm water, reducing air pollution, and providing valuable shade on our sunny city streets. To better understand these benefits, it's vital to have the appropriate data to assess our urban tree canopy. Accurate land cover maps are critical for environmental planning, as they provide precise information about our urban forest.

The Mayor's Executive Budget reflects \$1.8 million in federal CDBG funding to acquire and process an updated dataset using LiDAR surveying technology, which will assist in generating a new land cover map for New York City. This data will allow us identify areas of the city that have lost tree canopy and other vegetative cover in recent years, and help to prioritize future greening initiatives to equitably distribute ecological benefits throughout the city. Further, NYC Parks will have the ability to use this data in partnership with other city agencies, to identify opportunities for other types of green infrastructure such as green roofs or bioswales.

On a related note, the Executive Budget also provides funding for the completion of our TreesCount! Census. Beginning this past year and continuing through this year, a team of volunteers and Parks staff have been undertaking our 3rd decennial street tree census. This will give us an accurate count and assessment of the street-based component of our urban forest, allowing for more sophisticated management of our street trees. Using this data, our online information portal and interactive map of every single street tree in New York City will be ready for broad launch this year, so we look forward to getting you more updates about this exciting online tool in the near future.

All of these investments and strategic efforts are guided by a clear principle: distribute city resources in a ***Fair & Focused*** manner that reflects this administration's commitment to **Equity**. Our signature effort and the centerpiece of this strategic blueprint continues to be the Community Parks Initiative (or CPI), with more than \$285 million dollars dedicated to delivering capital funding, enhanced programming, maintenance and community partnership building to the neighborhood parks that need it the most, in a way that is inclusive and equitable. Mayor de Blasio is committed to providing further significant investment in parks around the city, and recognizes that certain larger parks help serve as a regional "anchor" providing vital recreational and natural amenities for multiple neighborhoods. To this end, we are very excited that the Fiscal Year 2017 Executive Budget provides \$150 million in capital funding to provide significant renovations to five "Anchor Parks" throughout the city, one in each borough.

This commitment to fairness and equity is a reflection of our efforts to see that more New Yorkers have access to parks and open space that they can enjoy every day. As part of his strategic plan for the city, "OneNYC," the Mayor established that more New Yorkers should benefit from useful, accessible and beautiful open spaces, and set a specific goal of seeing that the City increase the percentage of New Yorkers living within walking distance to a park from 81 percent to 85 percent by the year 2030. To help achieve this goal, the Executive Budget includes \$48 million to leverage existing resources and private support to bring the City closer to the target



through the development of newly acquired parkland and conversion of additional schoolyards to public playgrounds.

Lastly, while discussing matters of fairness and increased access to open space and recreational facilities, it should be noted that the great borough of Staten Island has long been the only borough without an indoor pool operated by the City. I'm pleased to announce that Mayor de Blasio seeks to rectify this in the Executive Budget, in the form of \$50 million in capital funding for NYC Parks' first indoor pool facility on Staten Island, which will allow even more New Yorkers to enjoy the benefits of physical fitness and social interaction that our recreation centers and pools can offer.

As I hope my testimony today has made clear, New York City is proud of its role as a leader in global and national trends regarding park and open space planning. We always strive to serve as a model for cities around the world and meet the sustainability goals of the United Nations' "U.N.-Habitat" program, in particular Target 11.7: by 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities.

Next week, NYC Parks will be hosting a summit on the future of parks and urban spaces, co-hosted by The New School, which we're calling "Parks Without Borders." The daylong conference will bring together the leading minds in parks and public spaces from NYC and across the country, focusing on the role of the 21st century park system and the next era of park planning, including innovative design, equity, engagement, resiliency, ecological and landscape connectivity. We'll also be announcing the 8 signature project selections for our recent design initiative, also called "Parks Without Borders." I'm told that several Council Members already plan on attending, and we cordially invite you all to join us.

Our agency is committed to creating a 21st Century parks system that serves as a model for cities around the world, and I have been happy to meet with you today to discuss our continued efforts to achieve that vision.

Thank you for allowing me to testify before you today and for your dedication to providing great parks and open spaces for all New Yorkers. We look forward to continue working with the Mayor and the City Council to **create a bright, green future with a more equitable and innovative park system**. We value your partnership and thank you for your support of our agency. Now, I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have. Joining me will be First Deputy Commissioner Liam Kavanagh, and Matt Drury, our Director of Government Relations.



Hudson River Park Trust

May 20, 2016

The Honorable Melissa Mark-Viverito
Speaker, New York City Council
250 Broadway, Suite 1856
New York, NY 10007

The Honorable Julissa Ferreras-Copeland
Finance Committee Chair, New York City Council
250 Broadway, Suite 1866
New York, NY 10007

Re: FY 17 Funding Application - Hudson River Park Education Programming

Dear Speaker Mark-Viverito and Council Member Ferreras-Copeland:

I write in support of Hudson River Park's city-wide funding application for the Park's environmental education programming. Council funding for these fast-growing programs will **allow us to continue to serve as a vital STEM resource for thousands of New York City school children from across the five boroughs**. Our enrichment programs also provide **unlimited opportunities for direct, hands-on interaction with nature** – a rare, yet necessary experience for urban families.

Hudson River Park is a 550-acre park and estuarine sanctuary from Chambers Street to W. 59th Street in Manhattan. It includes four miles of waterside esplanade and bikepath; 16 reconstructed public piers to date; and four dedicated community boathouses for sailing, rowing and paddling. The Park's 400-acres of sanctuary waters serve as the catalyst for its comprehensive program of science-based environmental education and river stewardship. Attracting over 17 million visits each year, Hudson River Park is like no other outdoor space in New York City in its abundance and diversity of opportunities to both play and learn in and around the water. Hudson River Park is also different from other public parks in that we do not receive any direct government funding to operate and maintain this expansive portfolio of public amenities and resources.

Using the Hudson River waterfront as our classroom, Hudson River Park hosts numerous free and low cost environmental education programs for school groups, summer camps and the general public. **In 2015, we hosted 400 such programs serving over 20,000 people**. While we may be located in Manhattan, our impact is city-wide with over half of our student groups travelling to us from the outer boroughs: **36% from the Bronx, 14% from Brooklyn, and 10% from Queens and Staten Island**. We also believe that everyone should have an opportunity to

Madelyn Wils | President & Chief Executive Officer

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www.hudsonriverpark.org

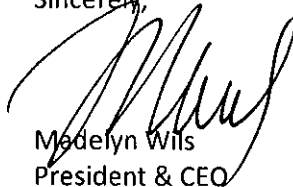
experience one of our programs regardless of ability to pay. As such, **we proudly waive nearly 70% of our programs fees upon demonstration of need**, and 80% of the children we serve are enrolled in NYC DOE free/reduced meal program.

SUBMERGE: NYC Marine Science Festival, taking place this year on Saturday, September 24th, is our culminating event to a full roster of summer-long public science enrichment. Founded by the Park in 2014 with partner, New York Hall of Science, this free, day-long science festival attracted over 4,000 attendees in its inaugural year, and celebrates NYC's coastal waters while engaging participants in hands-on marine science activities from noted scientists.

The Park's environmental enrichment programming continues to grow steadily each year. In 2014, we experienced a 50% increase in the number of participants we served. Last year, our numbers increased again, as we served 20% more than the year prior. Just last year, for example, we expanded our programming to include custom **after-school/school break programs for Hudson Guild** (the community organization serving NYCHA's Chelsea Elliot and Fulton Houses). This year, we are now adding an additional fishing program specifically modified for older adults to enjoy.

For FY17, the Park has estimated that it will cost about five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) for the staffing and resources necessary to implement our full portfolio of environmental enrichment programming, stewardship and related environmental monitoring projects throughout the park. Council funding support in the amount requested of one-hundred and thirty thousand dollars (\$130,000) is critically needed to allow us to continue to deliver high-quality, STEM-focused outdoor education to so many New Yorkers – young and old. Enclosed please find our 2016 Environment & Education Program Guide for your reference. Please don't hesitate to contact me directly if you would like additional information. Thank you for your consideration of this funding application.

Sincerely,



Madelyn Wils
President & CEO

SCHOOL PROGRAMS

SCHOOL YEAR PROGRAMS FOR ORGANIZED GROUPS

FALL & SPRING: T, W, TH, F

Hudson River Park hosts low-cost environmental education programming for school groups, using the Hudson River waterfront as its classroom. Our programs allow students to interact with the River and Park through enriching and fun activities that will inspire the scientist within each of your students!

COST \$200 FEE PER PROGRAM*
Preregistration required.

NEW! JUNIOR EXPLORERS

Grades K–1

Bring your youngest students to explore the Hudson River! This program allows budding scientists to investigate various Park animals with scientific inquiry and nature-inspired crafts.

GO FISH!

Grades 2–5

This program introduces students to life under the Hudson River through hands-on activities including catch and release fishing, fish anatomy surveys, touch tank discovery and an interactive life cycle game.

BEAKS & BOTANICALS

Grades 2–5

Students investigate the Park's land-based plants and animals through a tree/native plant scavenger hunt, bird beak investigation and bird migration activity.

FOOD WEB FUN

Grades 2–5

Tiny aquatic creatures known as plankton are essential to a healthy river and planet. In this program, students use microscopes to examine live plankton specimens and explore the important role of zooplankton and phytoplankton in the Hudson River food web.

OUR LIVING ESTUARY

Grades 3–8

This program explores estuary basics and investigates the health of the Hudson River. Students learn about local water conditions by collecting water samples and conducting water chemistry experiments.

FISH BIOLOGY

Grades 6–12

Students learn about fish biology and anatomy topics through an engaging fish dissection and catch and release fishing.

URBAN FORESTRY LAB

Grades 6–12

This program focuses on the benefits of Hudson River Park's trees by measuring and discussing ecosystem services. Students also learn basics of composting that keeps park trees healthy.

PLANKTON ECOLOGY

Grades 6–12

Through a microscopic analysis of river water samples, students examine the different physical traits that define plankton. Students then get to apply what they've learned to design and test their own plankton models.

WATER QUALITY 101

Grades 9–12

This program teaches students about the Hudson River estuary system through collaborative experiments. Hands-on activities allow students to test the River's physical and chemical properties and analyze trends on graphs.

MARITIME VOYAGE

Grades 2–12

The West Side waterfront is full of historical artifacts and maritime stories. Students learn about NYC's rich waterfront history while they tour a historic vessel and practice nautical skills like knot tying.

Program components align with Common Core and NGSS education standards. Visit hudsonriverpark.org for more information.

School Year Programs are made possible by support from The Phillip & Janice Levin Foundation

SUMMER PROGRAMS FOR ORGANIZED GROUPS

SUMMER: M, T, W, TH

Enhance your camp with field trips to Hudson River Park! Campers can enjoy fishing, science experiments, tree scavenger hunts, historic vessel tours and much more.

COST \$200 FEE PER PROGRAM*
Preregistration required.

ESTUARY ADVENTURES

Ages 7–16

Campers have fun outdoors while learning about river science and fish biology. This program invites campers to practice catch and release fishing and experience river critters up close.

URBAN NATURALIST

Ages 7–16

Grab your magnifying glasses! Explore the Park's trees and wildlife through educational games that highlight plant identification and bird behaviors.

PLANKTON DISCOVERIES

Ages 7–16

This program introduces campers to basic marine science concepts through one of the River's smallest creatures – plankton. Campers use microscopes and learn about food webs.

NAVIGATION & KNOTS

Ages 7–16

Ahoy! This program invites campers to learn about NYC's rich waterfront history aboard a docked historic vessel. Interactive lessons teach nautical skills like knot tying.

NEW! JUNIOR EXPLORERS

Ages 5–8

Bring your youngest campers to explore the Hudson River! This program allows budding scientists to investigate various Park animals with scientific inquiry and nature-inspired crafts.

CAMP PROGRAMS

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Hudson River Park offers an array of drop-in programs for everyone to enjoy! From fishing to nature walks and much more, these programs invite the general public to connect with the Park and River through enriching and relaxing outdoor fun.

BIG CITY FISHING FREE

Adults and kids aged 5+ learn how to fish while engaging with trained environmental educators about river science topics.

JUNE 5–SEPT 18: SUNDAYS, 12–4PM
Pier 25 at N. Moore St.

JULY 3–AUG 21: SUNDAYS, 12–4PM
Pier 46 at Charles St.
Pier 84 at W44 St.

JULY 11–AUG 22: MONDAYS, 5–7:30PM
Pier 25 at N. Moore St.

**JULY 6 & AUG 24:
WEDNESDAYS, 5–7:30PM**
Pier 46 at Charles St.
No programs on July 4th

NEW! SHELL-EBRATE OYSTERS! FREE

Oysters filter water, engineer reef habitat, and stabilize shorelines. Work alongside Park staff to restore oysters and learn how these bivalves benefit the health of the River.

JULY 3–AUG 21: SUNDAYS, 4:30–6PM
Pier 25 at N. Moore St.
Preregistration recommended at hudsonriverpark.eventbrite.com

NEW! SENIOR FISHING FREE

Drop in a line and relax by the beautiful Park waterfront. Older adults are invited to try their luck at catch and release fishing.

JUNE 16–AUG 25: THURSDAYS, 2–3PM
Pier 63 At W23 St.

POP UP MAKER SPACE FREE

Calling all Makers! Join us at our outdoor Maker Space for weekly workshops challenging participants to design and construct solutions to real-world problems. Come tinker, test and learn in Hudson River Park.

JULY 3–AUG 21: SUNDAYS, 4:30–6PM
Pier 84 at W44 St.

JULY 7–AUG 25: THURSDAYS, 5–7PM
Pier 25 at N. Moore St.
Preregistration recommended at hudsonriverpark.eventbrite.com

HUDSON RIVER NATURE WALK FREE

Learn about Hudson River Park's wildlife by joining knowledgeable naturalists on guided nature walks along the Park's esplanade.

JUNE 5–SEPT 25: SUNDAYS, 9–10AM
Meet at the Christopher St. Fountain
Preregistration recommended at hudsonriverpark.eventbrite.com

RIVER RANGER CLUB

Each week, kids ages 5–9 explore the wonders of the Hudson River ecosystem through hand-on lessons and live animals. Children learn about important Hudson River wildlife, such as seahorses and crabs, through discovery-based science experiments and nature-inspired crafts.

JULY 11–AUG 29: MONDAYS, 2:30–3:30PM
Pier 25 at N. Moore St.

JULY 7–AUG 25: THURSDAYS, 1–2PM
Pier 46 Upland at Charles St.

Registration required at hudsonriverpark.eventbrite.com

COST FOR 8 PROGRAMS \$120
SPECIAL RATE EXCLUSIVELY FOR CURRENT FRIENDS OF HUDSON RIVER PARK CARDHOLDERS \$90

WATERFRONT WALKING TOUR

Discover NYC's dynamic waterfront history through a guided walking tour led by a local historian. The tour concludes at the Frying Pan restaurant where participants can enjoy a drink and a narrated tour of the historic lightship.

TWO TOURS OFFERED
Tues, June 21 & Tues, Aug 2
6:30–7:30pm at Pier 62
Cross at W23 St.

COST \$15 includes one complementary drink aboard the Frying Pan

To sign up, go to brooklynbrainery.com/courses



NEW! SUNSET PARK CRUISE

June 15 & Aug 15

Join Hudson River Park and the American Institute of Architects New York Chapter aboard a 1920's style yacht for a special Park tour. Learn about the planning, design and history of Hudson River Park from experts while enjoying beautiful NYC views from the water. Each ticket includes one complimentary drink.

TWO TOURS OFFERED Wed, June 15 & Mon, Aug 15
6–7:30pm at Pier 62, cross at W23 St.

TICKETS hudsonriverpark.org

ADULTS \$48

STUDENTS \$32

SPECIAL RATE EXCLUSIVELY FOR CURRENT FRIENDS OF HUDSON RIVER PARK CARDHOLDERS \$32



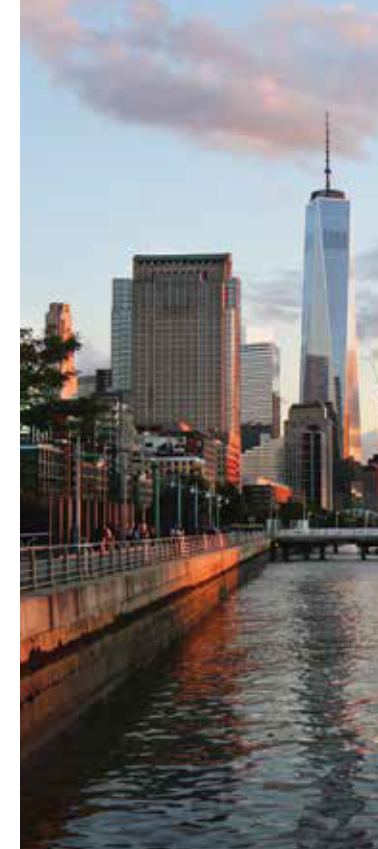
SUBMERGE NYC Marine Science Festival

Sat, Sept 24

Hudson River Park Trust and the *New York Hall of Science* present SUBMERGE, a science festival celebrating NYC's coastal waters. Join us for free hands-on marine science activities, live music, presentations by noted scientists, citizen science, kayaking, fishing and more!

A splash of science in the city!

11am–4pm
Pier 26 at N. Moore St.



**26 Broadway, 6th Floor
New York, NY 10004**
phone (646) 826-8100
fax (646) 826-8101
www.LMC896.org

Council Member Margaret Chin
250 Broadway
Suite 1882
New York, NY 10007

March 16, 2016

Re: **Letter of Support for Hudson River Park Trust's** Funding Application for
Environmental Education Programming

Dear Council Member Chin:

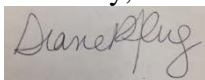
This letter of support is in regards to Hudson River Park Trust's proposed application for NYC City Council expense discretionary funds to support environmental education and programs in Hudson River Park.

Lower Manhattan Community Middle School is a small public middle school serving grades six through eight. We believe that students should have a wide variety of excellent educational experiences, including field trip opportunities. At Lower Manhattan Community Middle School, we get to know our students and we give them what they need to be successful. We hold this belief for all students, regardless of whether they excel academically or they need support. We also believe students learn best when they are provided with real world opportunities to learn by engaging in inquiry, research and reflection. It is this real world connection that makes our relationship with Hudson River Park meaningful.

Hudson River Park is a short trip from our school campus, and therefore a green space that many of our students use. Over the past couple of seasons, several of our classes have worked alongside Park staff on volunteer projects, as part of our community service days. Our students have taken on the role of "River Stewards" – a group of individuals caring for and looking after the Hudson River through these projects. These students not only had the opportunity to learn valuable skills but also make a positive impact by improving habitat in the Park.

In conclusion, I wholly support Hudson River Park's continued efforts to educate students about the Hudson River. Park programming continues to enhance our students' experience and empowers their learning experiences of the local environment.

Sincerely,



Diane Pflug
7th Grade Science Teacher
MfA Master Teacher

THE KINGSBRIDGE HEIGHTS SCHOOL
Public School 86
2756 Reservoir Avenue
Bronx, N.Y. 10468
Telephone: (718)584-5585 Fax: (718)584-7027

Fiona Tyson
Principal

Ana Garcia
Robert Carl Hajek
Renny Tranello
Assistant Principals

April 15, 2016

Council Member Cohen
277 West 231st Street
Bronx, NY 10463

Re: Letter of Support for Hudson River Park Trust's Funding Application for Environmental Education Programming

Dear Council Member Cohen:

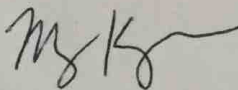
I write this letter on behalf of PS 86 to support Hudson River Park Trust's application to the City Council for city-wide funding of its environmental education programs.

For the past three years, I have brought my fifth grade students to Hudson River Park, a waterfront park located on the west side of Manhattan, to learn marine science. In addition to being a great waterfront destination for my students to visit, the Park's education programs are an interactive opportunity for them to observe live Hudson River animals, explore life cycles, and experience catch and release fishing. For most of my students, this is an eye-opening experience. Most, in fact, do not even know that there are fish swimming in NYC's waters.

The high quality of their programming and their liberal willingness to waive fees upon demonstration of need make the long commute well worth it. At PS 86, we work very hard to give children experiences such as field trips in order to expose them to as much as possible. My fifth grade students study the interconnected organisms in an ecosystem and human impacts. Hudson River Park field trips give my students a hands-on opportunity to further understand NYC as an important ecosystem, especially the organisms within it. Participating in these programs allow my class to see that NYC is more than just buildings, taxis and traffic. This is a great learning experience as it fosters a respect for nature and our environment.

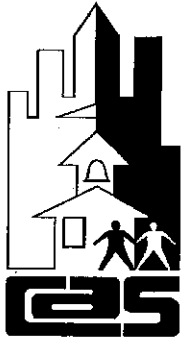
Please give Hudson River Park's proposal for education funding strong consideration. I support their efforts to educate and inspire NYC students about the Hudson River. Their programming provides countless engaging opportunities to children in the five boroughs of New York City and beyond.

Sincerely,



Megan Kaye

cc: Corey Johnson, NYC Council Member
Tina Walsh, Hudson River Park



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

CITY-AS-SCHOOL

Fred Koury Campus

Alan Cheng, Principal

16 CLARKSON STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10014-4377 (212) 337-6800 FAX (212) 337-6875

Council Member Corey Johnson
224 West 30th St (Suite 1206)
New York, NY 10001

March 4, 2016

Re: **Letter of Support for Hudson River Park Trust's Funding Application for Environmental Education Programming**

Dear Council Member Johnson:

It is my pleasure to write a letter of support for Hudson River Park Trust's application for NYC City Council expense discretionary funds to support environmental education in Hudson River Park.

My students at City-As-School have benefitted greatly from Hudson River Park's educational offerings. Through participating in the Park's free and low-cost science programs, my students have learned biology, earth science, and chemistry concepts with hands-on, interactive lessons. For most of my students, participation on one of the Park's river-focused programs is their first introduction to the Hudson River ecosystem. Participation in this programming undoubtedly helps them to develop a greater appreciation for the importance of this vital natural resource.

Additionally, each spring, Hudson River Park staff mentors a high school student from City-As-School. During their semester-long internship, students develop job readiness and career-path skills while working alongside the Park's education staff. The knowledgeable and engaging Park staff has been an invaluable resource for my students as they learn science research and education skills.

In conclusion, I fully support Hudson River Park Trust's application for City Council expense discretionary funds as well as their continued efforts to educate and inspire individuals about the Hudson River. Their programming provides countless enrichment opportunities to the community and fosters meaningful appreciation of New York City's natural environment.

Sincerely,

Naima Freitas

Biology Teacher/ Internship Coordinator

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Executive Director

Robert Burke

Council Member Corey Johnson
224 West 30th St (Suite 1206)
New York, NY 10001

March 8, 2016

Re: **Letter of Support for Hudson River Park Trust's Funding Application for Environmental Education Programming**

Dear Council Member Johnson:

This support letter is on behalf of Hudson River Park's application for funding of their environmental education programs. I am writing on behalf of Hudson River Community Sailing in support of the Park's efforts to continue educating students and the general public about the Hudson River.

Hudson River Community Sailing, a tenant of Hudson River Park's Pier 66 boathouse, was founded in 2007 to serve the urban community. We partner with public schools to develop leadership and academic success in underserved New York City youth through sailing education. We also serve the broader community through affordable marine education and recreation for individuals, groups, schools, businesses, and families. Each season, thousands of people from across the world come to Pier 66 to sail with us. Working on and in the river I have a unique appreciation for the importance of the Hudson Estuary as a vital natural resource.

Hudson River Park's educational programs align with our core values regarding the Hudson River estuary. Their informative and engaging educational programs benefit students from all five boroughs and the community at large. I wholly support the Park's application for City Council Expense Discretionary funds. I sincerely hope that requested funds will be awarded so that the millions who visit the Park each year can enjoy new ways to engage with and learn about the Hudson River estuary with hands-on educational programs.

Sincerely,



Robert Burke
Executive Director



OFFICE OF THE BROOKLYN BOROUGH PRESIDENT

Testimony of Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams

**New York City Council Committee on Parks and Recreation
Jointly with the Committee on Finance**

Council Chambers – City Hall

Friday, May 20, 2016

Good morning New York City Council Committee on Parks and Recreation Chair Mark Levine, as well as Council Committee on Finance Chair Julissa Ferreras-Copeland, and to all the council members of both committees. Thank you for the opportunity to testify at today's executive budget hearing on New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR).

Brooklyn is home to more than 550 Parks properties, which include close to 4,800 acres of land. However, much of that land is underutilized, understaffed, and underdeveloped as park space. I am here to advocate for increased capital funding to DPR's budget for the creation of new parks. Brooklyn is home to more than 2.6 million people, and communities in heavily-populated north and central Brooklyn, such as Crown Heights, East Flatbush, and Williamsburg, are starved for open space, and underserved Brooklynites who live throughout that zone in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brownsville, Bushwick, and East New York have limited access to neighborhood amenities. As a result, these populations suffer from quality of life issues such as depression, obesity, violence, and other devastating ailments that can be attributed to a dearth of open space.

This is why I have tapped into all the tools in my toolbox to address parks inequity. I have used my capital budget to ensure that improvements to our parks and our open spaces are made across the borough in an equitable fashion; I have issued innovative recommendations in my Uniform Land Use Review Procedures (ULURP) to direct new tax revenue from developments to purchase parkland such as Bushwick Inlet Park, and I have advocated for investment in parks with my colleagues in government as well as empowered civic groups through small discretionary grants to improve caretaking of parks through community action.

However, collectively, New York City must do better to address park inequity through the Parks budget and direct attention and focus to the creation of open space in New York City, particularly in the borough of Brooklyn. As our population grows, open space to congregate, as well as to recreate, and invigorate, needs to grow as well.

Brooklyn is facing an open space crisis and while Mayor de Blasio has set an ambitious agenda of creating more parks in New York City through the Community Parks Initiative, we need to recognize that open space is not a luxury for the few; it is a necessary component of a community that fosters healthy children and families. It does not matter if you are young or old, if you are rich or poor — our parks bring together Brooklynites of every age, race, and income level.

I am committed to improving local parks in dense and growing neighborhoods that have not seen significant capital investments, but it is impossible to do so with capital allocations from elected officials alone. DPR is reliant upon capital for the majority of its projects on piecemeal discretionary allocations from City Council members and borough presidents. Cobbling together allocations over multiple fiscal years from different elected officials is inefficient and leads to inequitable results.

This strategy was made even more difficult this year as a result of the unprecedented cut of the borough presidents' section 249 capital program. I echo the call of advocates to increase investment in DPR's capital budget by \$310 million for land acquisition, infrastructure improvements to Green Thumb gardens, and discretionary capital investment for the agency. This substantial investment will allow more efficient planning, improve the turnaround time for implementation of capital projects, and improve the quality of life of millions of our residents.

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**Testimony of
Chancellor James B. Milliken
The City University of New York
New York City Council Finance and Higher Education Committees
Fiscal Year 2016-2017 Executive Budget Hearing
May 20, 2016**

Good afternoon, Finance Committee Chairperson Ferreras [Julissa], Higher Education Committee Chairperson Barron, and committee members.

I am James B. Milliken, Chancellor of The City University of New York. Thank you for this opportunity to meet with you today and thank you for your long history of support of CUNY and its deserving students. I am joined today by a number of colleagues who may help me in answering your questions. Seated at the table with me are Matthew Sapienza, the Vice Chancellor for Budget and Finance, Judy Bergtraum, our Vice Chancellor for Facilities, Planning and Construction, and Ginger Waters, the Vice Chancellor for Human Resources.

Also, I am pleased to introduce Dr. Arlene Torres, who has joined us in the last year as University Dean for Recruitment and Diversity. And the presence of my

colleague Jermaine Wright, who leads the CUNY Black Male Initiative, reminds me that we were proud to honor Chairperson Barron a week ago at the first BMI gala. I have a few other colleagues here, but I promise you we didn't stack the entire audience. I will finally mention Senior Vice Chancellor Jay Hershenson. CUNY is almost 170 years old, and Jay joined the university sometime near the beginning.

This is a season of great hope and promise on our campuses as we move into graduations, which have already gotten started. For me this year, a treat that is second only to seeing so many of my students receive the degrees they've worked so hard to earn, is conferring an honorary degree on First Lady Michelle Obama, who will deliver the commencement address at City College on June 3. We think CUNY and the First Lady are a great match, and we are delighted to host her and grateful that our graduates will have the occasion to hear from her.

CUNY has a distinctive mission: our legislative mandate says the university must be "responsive to the needs of its urban setting," that we must operate as

“an integrated system,” and that we serve “as a vehicle for the upward mobility of the disadvantaged in the City of New York.”

We are committed to not just carrying out that mandate, but to constantly finding ways to strengthen it. We are currently engaged in a process of shaping new strategies that will sharpen our focus and improve our performance. It is a period of renewal and reinvigoration of our unique mission to insure that we are keeping up with changes in higher education and the need to equip our students to compete in the demanding knowledge economy. We must respond to the reality that, by 2020, 65 percent of all jobs will require postsecondary education, according to Georgetown’s Center on Education and Workforce. Georgetown also estimates that the U.S. will fall 5 million short of those needed numbers, so doing more to ensure our students get diplomas will open the door to lifetimes of improved opportunities and help our city prosper.

The investment that you make in New York City’s public university is perhaps the best way there is to address economic inequality...by opening the door to opportunity for so many talented young men and women eager to overcome

disadvantages and achieve their potential. By cultivating that talent and serving underrepresented communities we insure that new generations of CUNY graduates have economic opportunity which benefits not only them but their families and communities and that our city remains the financial, business, media and cultural capital of the country.

Graduates who obtain degrees from CUNY can typically expect to earn at least \$1 million over a lifetime than high school graduates. That carries particular significance when you consider that forty percent of CUNY's 275,000 students are the first in their families to attend college, and 40 percent were born in another country. But our students can achieve their goals, earn their diplomas and benefit from them only with the guidance and support of the CUNY faculty and staff who serve New York so well.

All great universities are great because of their faculty, and that is certainly the case at CUNY, where we have some of the most talented and committed faculty anywhere. That's why resolving a long overdue labor contract with our unions is our highest priority. We are working with our faculty unions and other unions

to reach agreement, but at the end of the day we cannot do that without the commitment and investment of both the city and the state. We are committed to successful resolution of our contracts—soon.

At the same time, we must continue to develop plans and strategies for CUNY's future, to deliver clear benefits for our students and the community in the years ahead. Our new strategic plan will set forth our ideas and what they will bring to our campuses and the city, but I wanted to review some of the objectives and explain briefly how they will make your investments in CUNY even more effective.

Our vision entails building far greater levels of connectivity and integration into our activities, within the university system, between CUNY and the city's schools, with community based organizations, other universities and with the employers who offer promising career paths for our students. These strategies will allow CUNY to leverage its assets and resources better to achieve a number of priorities:

--We will strengthen affordable access by continuing our historic commitment to modest tuition and robust public and private financial aid;

--We will increase successful completion of our remediation programs and improve early math performance for STEM majors;

--We will sharply improve retention and graduation rates at our community and senior colleges;

--We will attract and educate more adult learners, including those eager to advance or change careers;

--We will make it easier for students to take courses and transfer credits between campuses to increase choice, convenience, efficiency, and accelerate graduation rates;

--We will deepen connections with major New York employers and labor unions to ensure we educate students who meet their needs and to widen the pipelines for internships and jobs after graduation; and

--We will sharply increase our offerings of online courses, certificates and degree programs to offer more ways for matriculating students to gain credits, more opportunities for adult learners and ways for CUNY to expand its reach.

Before many students can begin their work towards a degree, they must overcome developmental education needs. And we are taking steps to get students who require remedial work in areas like writing and math through the process and into college-level courses as efficiently as possible. More students are entering CUNY Start and Math Start, very effective immersion programs that help students succeed, and we will soon introduce other ways to get students the basic capabilities they need to succeed in our classrooms and allow them to move swiftly toward their degrees.

Keeping CUNY accessible and affordable remains a core commitment. That's why we are extremely grateful that the City Council greatly assisted us in this mission by providing \$17 million in the current year's budget for the City Council Merit Scholarships. This initiative provides financial aid to students who graduated with an 80 average from New York City high schools and who maintained a B average at the University. These merit-based awards are available to deserving students at both the senior colleges and community colleges. The funding for this critical scholarship program should be restored as part of the City's Fiscal Year 2017 Adopted Budget.

But as you know, affordability and access—even if it were free—is not enough. Our goal is not to have the most students in college, to have the highest enrollment. Our goal includes having those student be successful, earn their degree, and get the benefits that accompany it.

The best way we've found to increase graduation rates is our Accelerated Study in Associate Programs, or ASAP, which is in place at our community colleges. We owe special thanks to you for the city's very strong support for

ASAP going back to when it was a pilot program. It has been a very productive investment. I am happy today to offer our latest and most impressive results – our most recent cohort three-year graduation rate was 57 percent – compared with about 23 percent for a comparable group of full-time community college students. For all urban community colleges in the country, the three-year graduation rate is about 16 percent, so you can see why we are so excited – and committed to expanding this pioneering program. Another strength of the program is how it has narrowed the achievement gap. Just to give one set of examples, the three-year graduations rate for white males in ASAP rose 20 percentage points as compared with comparable students not in the program, but for black males the rate rose by nearly 30 percentage points and for Hispanic men 31 points. We are determined continue to raise those rates.

ASAP costs about \$3,700 per student – funded mainly by the city's very generous support – but that is an amount that has gone down and will continue to decline as we scale up. More important, we are graduating so many more students that our cost per graduate is actually falling. We will increase the number of ASAP students from about 7,000 this year to 25,000 in 2018. We will

also enroll in ASAP all full-time students at one institution — Bronx Community College — and, with a privately funded pilot, we have expanded ASAP elements to a senior college — John Jay — for the first time.

As part of our effort to develop the benefits of greater integration, as called for in CUNY's organic legislation, and to improve student retention and attainment, we will reduce the friction in the paths from community colleges to the senior colleges, making it easier to transfer credits from one CUNY college to another, work to simplify the financial aid process, and build more streamlined and efficient connections among colleges so students can take courses on different campuses, when needed.

Another effort that will help our students graduate more quickly and attract new students is the expansion of our offerings of online courses. Digital instruction will sharply increase our reach, attracting new students, especially adult learners and giving us an opportunity for new revenues. There are more than a million adults in New York City with some college credits but no degrees, and we want to offer them the chance to obtain diplomas and boost their careers. In addition,

there are many adults who either need new credentials to advance in their professions, or who are contemplating career changes, and so need new certifications or competencies.

One step in this effort involves The Murphy Institute, which includes programs for working adults as well as providing education for the next generation of leaders in labor. I support the evolution of The Murphy Institute to The Murphy School, but this transition will require additional support if the new school is to achieve its potential, and our request includes much-needed funds for this purpose.

Earlier I introduced Dean Torres, who leads our recruitment and diversity efforts. Prior to assuming the deanship, Dr. Torres led CUNY's Latino Faculty Initiative. She will lead implementation of our University Diversity Action Plan, and partner with the campuses and other organizations to continue to develop ways to strengthen the pipeline of candidates from which CUNY can recruit for faculty, staff and administrative positions.

Turning to the capital budget, the City Council has been an outstanding partner to CUNY, and especially to our community colleges, by providing support for major new buildings at BMCC, Bronx CC and Hostos CC, a major library renovation at Medgar Evers, in addition to critical maintenance work at all campuses.

Critical maintenance continues to be a capital priority at our community college campuses and we are still in need of your support for the long-term effort. We have over 7 million square feet of community college facilities, three-quarters of which is more than 40 years old. The most serious need remains infrastructure systems that support facility operations. We believe that \$750 million is needed to keep the backlog of deferred maintenance from growing, so you will continue to see requests for critical maintenance funding from our colleges.

In recent years the Council has provided over \$200 million to CUNY and funded about a hundred projects, in particular at the community colleges where the need is greatest. Because of this support, CUNY has been able to address some of the most challenging critical maintenance issues. For instance, I am

happy to report that we are making good progress on construction of the new façade for LaGuardia Community College's Center 3 Building. Center 3's enormous façade is 100 years old and must be replaced if the building is to be preserved.

The Council has been generous to our senior colleges as well, by providing funding for new programs, special initiatives and equipment. Recently, you have provided support for Brooklyn College's new Graduate Film School at Steiner Studios, which opened last fall and we believe is a very positive addition to our offerings. Our school will bring diversity to an industry that has been conspicuously lacking in it and open the door to high-paying jobs for our very talented students. You also supported the renovation of the Child Development Center at Medgar Evers, another priority.

I've touched on a number of initiatives and priorities and want to stress that your support and guidance have been and continue to be essential elements in our success. I'm happy to answer your questions and address the issues that may interest or concern you. Your generous support for so many years has made

CUNY one of the most impactful universities in the country and, with the changes we are planning and with your help, it will be a model of the 21st century global, urban university.

Thank you.



Testimony of Loree Sutton, M.D., Brigadier General, U.S. Army, Retired
Commissioner of the New York City Department of Veterans' Services
New York City Council Committee on Veterans and Committee on Finance
Fiscal Year 2017 Executive Budget Hearings – Veterans
Council Chambers, City Hall
1:00 pm, Friday, May 20, 2016

Good afternoon, Chair Ulrich and Chair Ferreras-Copeland as well as respective members of the Committee on Veterans and the Committee on Finance. My name is Loree Sutton and I am honored to serve as the first Commissioner of the New York City Department of Veterans' Services (DVS). Thank you for the opportunity to meet and review the Fiscal Year 2017 Executive Budget with respect to the City's newest agency.

Let me start by acknowledging this historic moment -- and your indefatigable dedication to the wellbeing of NYC veterans and their families. . . Looking back, this past year brought forward a convergence of leadership – the Mayor, the Speaker, Mr. Chairman and the Committee on Veterans, the Veterans' Advisory Board, Team MOVA, now DVS, and the impassioned community of NYC's veteran advocates – whose collective timely achievements, characterized by strong collaboration, constructive partnership, substantive legislation and pioneering achievement, are briefly summarized below:

The newly appointed Veteran Advisory Board was strategically selected to ensure a diverse range of service backgrounds, community engagement interests, and professional expertise.

We are the first city in the nation to add Veteran Designator to the municipal ID card program (*IDNYC*), thereby facilitating enhanced access to veteran-specific services and benefits for veteran New Yorkers.

The City's commitment to veteran mental health, as an integral element of *ThriveNYC*, includes program element support for increased outreach; 311 improvements to connect NYC veterans and family members to the *Veteran Crisis Line* as well as City resources and services; and holistic services through an integrative health model of care.

On the career front, expanded employment opportunities for veterans and their families continue to grow, with over 2,500 veterans and their spouses placed in jobs through the City's Small Business Services *Workforce1* centers.

Our productive working relationship with the City Council achieved multiple legislative initiatives voted into law, culminating in the landmark bill signing of Local Law 113, authorizing the establishment of a separate agency, Department of Veteran Services, to better serve our veteran community. As of April 8, 2016, the new law is now in effect and our transition to full operational capacity is well underway.

Through concerted leadership, community partnerships and collaboration, we supported and participated in multiple special events drawing national attention.

MOVA moved to newly renovated 22nd floor office space at 1 Centre Street in the David N. Dinkins Municipal building, named after the former Mayor, one of our City's most renowned veterans.

Initiating a new City tradition, the Mayor hosted a Flag Ceremony followed by the posting all Service flags at the entrance of City Hall, a gesture of respect throughout Veterans' Week honoring service to country.

We partnered with the Department of Parks and Recreation, the Mayor's Office of People with Disabilities and the City Council in support of reduced fees at NYC Parks Department Recreation Centers for seniors, young adults, veterans and persons with disabilities.

Under the leadership of the Mayor, in collaboration with the Speaker and the City Council, the City supported an unprecedented increase in our budget and staffing capacity, a historic investment already yielding increased citywide outreach and impact.

Last December, the federal government validated NYC's benchmark success in effectively ending chronic veteran homelessness; under the Mayor's leadership, veteran homelessness overall has decreased by over 70 percent since January 2014.

Indeed, what an incredible year it has been, leading us to today's FY 2017 Executive Budget Hearing, in which we are focusing upon the City's new Department of Veterans' Services.

The Mayor's Fiscal Year 2017 Executive Budget designates approximately \$3M for Personal Services and nearly \$1M for Other Than Personal Services for the Department of Veterans' Services (DVS) initial year of operations, which commences on July 1, 2016. DVS is currently selecting highly qualified senior executive staff members for the new agency and will continue to

build the team and ramp up capacity over the ensuing twelve months, yielding DVS' full operating capacity by July 1, 2017.

With the creation of the Department of Veterans' Services, the City will now have the capability to develop a sustainable long-term strategy grounded in City leadership, public-private partnerships, and community engagement. Executing this strategy will yield the robust program development, direct services, and the research, policy and advocacy work needed to leverage the strengths and support the needs of the burgeoning population of approximately 500,000 veterans, service members of all components, and family members in New York City.

Below is a brief summary identifying key elements of DVS during its first year of operation:

DVS Vision

To honor and serve veterans and their families as *our City's leading natural renewable resource*

Mission

The Department of Veterans' Services is dedicated to improving the lives of New York City veterans and their families. Marshaling the collective resources of the City of New York, the Department will achieve the following objectives:

- Ensure that all veterans have permanent affordable housing and access to the support services needed to find and maintain their home
- Implement the *VetsThriveNYC* integrative health program to foster the physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing of veterans and their families
- Expand education and career opportunities for veterans through a rapidly growing network of City, public, private, and non-profit partners
- Provide the human and technological infrastructure for veterans and their families to gain City-wide access to benefits, resources and care through a leading coordinated service network

Structure & Function

The new agency includes three operational units aligned with DVS key strategic priorities, each led by an Assistant Commissioner with direct policy, programmatic, management, advocacy and constituent support responsibilities, augmented through outreach teams that provide and coordinate services for veterans and their families. Designed to function as a matrix leadership organization, DVS will task organize informal teams, aligning strategy, structure, processes, rewards and staff, to focus on complex cross-agency challenges.

Many of DVS' administrative functions will be delivered through working with multiple City entities to establish Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) over the coming year. The new

agency has three new executive lines of support: communication; external affairs; and administrative support. Importantly, this increased capacity will allow DVS to exercise centralized input, direct oversight, and City-wide ombudsmanship to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of all contract funds appropriated for the benefit of veterans and their families.

Further, DVS will hire a Senior Advisor for Public-Private Partnerships & Development as well as a Chief Information Officer to work collaboratively across the agency and create a coherent strategic communications and inter-governmental affairs strategy; advanced platforms and systems for technology/ tele-communications; and enduring public-private partnerships required for DVS to deliver and sustain the highest quality services and support.

Actions & Priorities

During our first year, DVS will focus upon multiple actions and priorities, including:

Hiring exceptional professionals to launch the new agency; build a cohesive team; create a generative culture; and develop the infrastructure, policies, operating procedures, services and programs needed for a start-up organization such as DVS to flourish. With military veteran status a plus – we are looking for service-driven and mission-focused team players, united in our commitment to make history by improving veterans’ lives in the greatest City in the world!

Effectively ending veteran homelessness in New York City and sustaining the gains through developing systems and applying resources to ensure that all veterans who become homeless are rapidly rehoused in permanent, affordable housing with the services they have earned and deserve. Specifically, DVS will work with its City and community partners, focusing on:

- Meeting “Functional Zero”: ending homelessness for veterans currently in shelter and developing a rapid rehousing system for housing new veterans within 90 days of entry
- Mitigating recidivism by bolstering ‘aftercare’ services through a dedicated coordinator who will drive assessment priorities and fully leverage the vital veteran peer coordinator role
- Leading efforts to systematize the assessment and housing placement of homeless veterans across systems and resources; scale this system to benefit all homeless New Yorkers

Amplifying the First Lady’s *ThriveNYC* mental health roadmap through implementing the *CoreFour* integrative health model to address the full impact of war – mind, body and spirit – for our veterans and their families, applying a peer-based community approach that increases engagement and lowers stigma and cost. Year one work includes:

- Forming a consortium of NYC service providers to participate in implementing the *CoreFour model*, which leads with trained peer intervention and integrates education, culture & the arts with holistic services and clinical care for veterans and their families
- Conducting City-wide outreach to better connect veterans and family members with a comprehensive range of resources specifically tailored to their needs and strengths
- Enhancing access to holistic services in non-clinical settings
- Engaging in the *ThriveNYC* education campaign to erode stigma and foster engagement

Executing DVS' strategy for recruiting and connecting Veterans and their Families to City Careers, Services and Resources through a phased action plan aimed at:

- Redesigning DVS website for direct access to City job opportunities
- Collaborating with DCAS City-wide Recruitment/*WorkForce 1* and the public/private sectors to identify HR best practices for City-wide Agency dissemination and application
- Standardizing City-wide intake forms to foster self-identification of veterans & families
- Establishing *NYC Veteran Business Leadership Consortium (VBLC)*, designed to enhance business and procurement opportunities for veteran business owners

Launching *VetConnectNYC*, a digital platform/portal and coordinated service network connecting veterans and their families with comprehensive referrals, counseling, and benefit support, including ready access through 311 digital platforms to the *Veteran Crisis Line*. We are currently working with the Mayor's Office of Contract Services to prepare a Pre-Solicitation Report, which will provide a description of the required services and software as well as other detailed requirements that will yield the most appropriate and effective procurement mechanism.

Building upon the *Task Force on Behavioral Health and the Criminal Justice System* and its progress to date through applying a systems lens to fully assess veteran needs in the criminal justice system, including coordinated access to housing, employment, legal and health services

Improving access to veteran benefits by training a team of outreach workers and establishing a satellite office in each of the boroughs to provide assistance direct to veterans in the community

Collaborating with the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York to establish and maintain strategic partnerships with private entities, non-profit organizations and foundations to generate support and foster bold investment designed to launch advanced rapid prototypes and scale sustainable social impact initiatives to benefit NYC veterans and families of all generations

Developing and implementing a digital trans-media plan, including:

- Launching new website platform to facilitate interaction and access to resources

- Engaging strategic media outlets to amplify DVS key messages and activities
- Expanding the interactive universe of veterans connecting with DVS by setting and meeting social media targets for maximal awareness, engagement and activity

Continuing DVS collaboration with MOSPCE, CECM & VSO partners to assist and organize major veterans' commemorative ceremonies and special events which honor service. At this time of the year, we are especially delighted to welcome the over 4,000 Sailors, Marines and Coast Guard members who are preparing to visit New York City during Fleet Week, whose 2016 calendar of shipboard and community activities is brimming with amazing experiences throughout the city. At the end of this momentous week, New Yorkers will solemnly observe Memorial Day, commemorating the service and sacrifice of those who are no longer with us. We offer our thoughts and prayers for their loved ones, with a special moment of recognition and gratitude for our Gold Star Families. Families serve too – we owe them our heartfelt respect. In closing, I want to again thank all who have worked so hard to make our new Department a reality – we are truly all in this together. Working as a team, we have achieved so much and, yet, I know you will agree that our most important work is still in front of us.

To this end, I remain absolutely confident that the Mayor's Executive Budget provides the necessary resources to fully accomplish the DVS mission to improve the lives of NYC veterans and their families. Further, my optimism knows no bounds as we prepare to embark upon this next leg of our historic journey. In short, I am extraordinarily proud to serve shoulder to shoulder with each of you.

Chairman Ulrich, I want to take a final moment to again express my gratitude for your tireless leadership and for today's opportunity to meet with you for the first time as the Commissioner of the New York City Department of Veterans' Services. Thank you for *your* service.

At this time, I am pleased to address your comments and questions. Thank you very much.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 20 MAR 2016

Name: LOREE SUTTON / DVS
(PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 1 CENTRE STREET / SUITE 2208

I represent: DVS

Address: 1 St

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/19/16

Name: DONNA LINDERMAN, Univ. Dean Student
(PLEASE PRINT)

Address: CUNY OAH 1600 4th SUCCESS INITIATIVE

I represent: BLANK MELLER

Address: CITY UNIV OF NEW YORK

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

Name: VICE CHANCELLOR JUDY BERGTRUM
(PLEASE PRINT)

Address: FACILITIES AND MANAGEMENT

I represent: _____

Address: CUNY

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: _____

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: _____

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: _____

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: PROF. ALLAN WERNICK

Address: CUNY

I represent: CITIZENSHIP NOW DIRECTOR

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/20/16

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Mike Deane

Address: NYC Parks

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/20/16

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: David Stark

Address: NYC Parks

I represent: _____

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Commissioner Mitchell Silver, FAICP

Address: _____

I represent: Parks

Address: 830 5th Ave

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Commissioner Mitchell Silver, FAICP

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Commissioner Liam Kavanagh

Address: Parks

I represent: Parks 830 5th Ave

Address: 830 5th Ave

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Matt Drury

Address: 830 5th Ave

I represent: Parks

Address: 830 5th Ave

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms