Committee on Parks and Recreation

Date	6/24/08
Start Time	
Finish Time	

OVERSIGHT HEARING
STATUS of YANKEE STADIUM REPLACEMENT PARKS
250 BROADWAY ~ 14th FLOOR HEARING ROOM
TUESDAY, JUNE 24, 2008 ~ 1 : P.M.

TESTIMONY OF
MRS. JOYCE E. HOGI
1020 GRAND CONCOURSE
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"Respondents contend there is no irreparable harm, because the loss of the parkland is only temporary, there will be a net gain of 2.14 acres of unencumbered parkland..."

(Judge Herman Cahn's decision, p 17, August 15, 2006)

Good afternoon! I am Joyce Hogi, a resident of 1020 Grand Concourse, Bronx, NY for 30+ years. Thank you for holding these hearings and thank you for inviting me to offer my testimony. I can't help but wonder if this is now too little, too late; indeed, what is now to be gained after the loss of of unprotected, public parkland. My late husband and I raised our three children in the South Bronx. We are and always have been hard-working, taxpaying citizens who felt that our hard work should count for something in this town. Regrettably, that is not the case. While trying to teach our children the lessons of government and citizenship (they are productive and vote in each election), we struggled to explain to them why our elected officials think so little of their constituency and so highly of themselves. I have this same struggle with the young people who are now in my life. There is not a good example to show them.

Let me share with you an example that will not leave my memory:
The constituents of Councilwoman Maria del Carmen Arroyo were waiting with her on the sidewalk outside the City Planning office to go in and testify against the Yankee Stadium project. Randy Levine was coming down the street and the Councilwoman ran to meet and embrace him. She in effect told the people who had elected her to office that "you don't count, you are not important".

I am here today to speak for my fellow community residents who could not be here; either because they are working, disheartened or so beaten down by the treatment they are receiving that they have pretty much given up; that they have said, "we can't beat the system". We in the community were horrified when we learned that every one of our elected officials ~ from the City Council up to the Senate had voted to give away our valuable, historic public parkland to the New York Yankees for the building of their new stadium without a single public hearing and over the course of just eight days! Such a cavalier action for each of them. No one questioned, "what will the community do?" "How will this affect a community that is already under parked?" "What about the health risks to a constituency that is already suffering unduly from limited access to fresh air and parkland?" An assemblywoman even proclaimed that "there's no community opposition".

We were locked out of hearings or if admitted, had our cards "shuffled" so that the minimum number of residents could speak. No consideration of our input was taken and when members of the Community Board voted against the plan ~ because they were listening and hearing the concerns of the community ~ they were summarily dismissed from the Board. The Bronx Boro Pres said he wanted people who would "advance his vision". Meanwhile, new appointees to the board are wont to make any independent decisions lest they offend the Boro Pres; the board is now at its most dysfunctional since its inception. There are 50 slots on the board and there are only 19 or 20 members. Quorums are routinely not met.

Naive as we were, we still held out hope that the Department of Parks & Recreation and the National Park Service, which are charged with the protection of green spaces, would protect our public parkland. However, as stated in a report by NYC Park Advocates ~ "Broken Promises", these agencies, "with the help of elected officials have been used to provide cover for a greedy corporation to seize public parkland from the poorest Congressional district in the nation". We found that they were complicit with the Yankees organization before the community became aware of the scheme.

We formed a grassroots organization, "SaveOurParks" and took the City and the Yankees to court to protect our public parks. We lost the case (August 15, 2006) because lawyers for each side assured the court that interim replacement parks would be in place before construction began. The Yankees seized the park midnight Sunday evening~August 13, 2006, 2 days before the judge's ruling. After weeks of community outrage, the DPR quickly painted "walking & fitness paths" and stenciled arrows on the sidewalks around an existing park. When questioned, the Parks Commissioner claimed this was not supposed to be the interim parks. Construction on an interim park would not begin until weeks later (opened May, 2007) and was so poorly constructed that the artificial turf was ripped up a few weeks later to be replaced.

There have been numerous articles, interviews and documentation on this issue. Simply put, the community has come up on the very "short end of the stick" and ***no one is standing up for us***. I am outraged! I have tried to work within the system to make sure that we are getting what we were promised. I joined the parks committee of Community Board 4 and question the parks' employees who come before us with their drawings and charts. If something is missing and I request it, we don't receive the information. My sense is that they are "bidding time". There have already been changes to the designs of some of the parks. None have been started. The changes to the size of the garages is of great concern to me, because again, you have the city going to EDC with one plan and the DPR coming to us with another. I have asked for copies of the design that's presented at our meetings and have not received them. There is no continuity, which usually means there are no real plans to follow through. Two of the spaces for replacement parks are still being used for parking for games. Design and approval delays are the reasons given.

In addition, we have learned that the old stadium might not come down immediately after this season ends. ***The reason?*** The Yankees have the option of asking for it to stay open for an additional year. They can exercise this option twice!

The City continues to proclaim that the community is getting more parkland than we lost. In actuality, 12.5 acres already existed as either mapped parkland and in one case, a schoolyard. This is a shell game the City uses and when called on it, the figures are changed. Recently, a ribbon-cutting ceremony for a new playground at PS 29 that was billed as part of the "Yankee Stadium replacement parks" was held over a mile away from the affected community (a different community board). This construction is a part of the Mayor's PlaNYC2030 to turn some schoolyards into playgrounds. This is a fine idea as the schools' playgrounds should never have been taken away, but make no mistake, this is not a replacement park for our community. Additionally, an unused field at West Bronx Recreation Center has been turned into a ball field; again over a mile away and not easily accessed. This has also been billed as a "Yankee replacement ball field", but was never mentioned in project documents. Geoffrey Croft of NYC Park Advocates has continuously pressed this issue of the counting of the replacement park acreage.

We don't have anyone to speak for us! When we tried to hold a meeting and invite electeds to hear our concerns, a neighborhood school had agreed to let us use the auditorium. City officials made them cancel it a couple days before our event, citing "political events" could not be held there. We certainly remember going into a public school for one of the hearings the Boro Pres planned on the Yankee Stadium project.

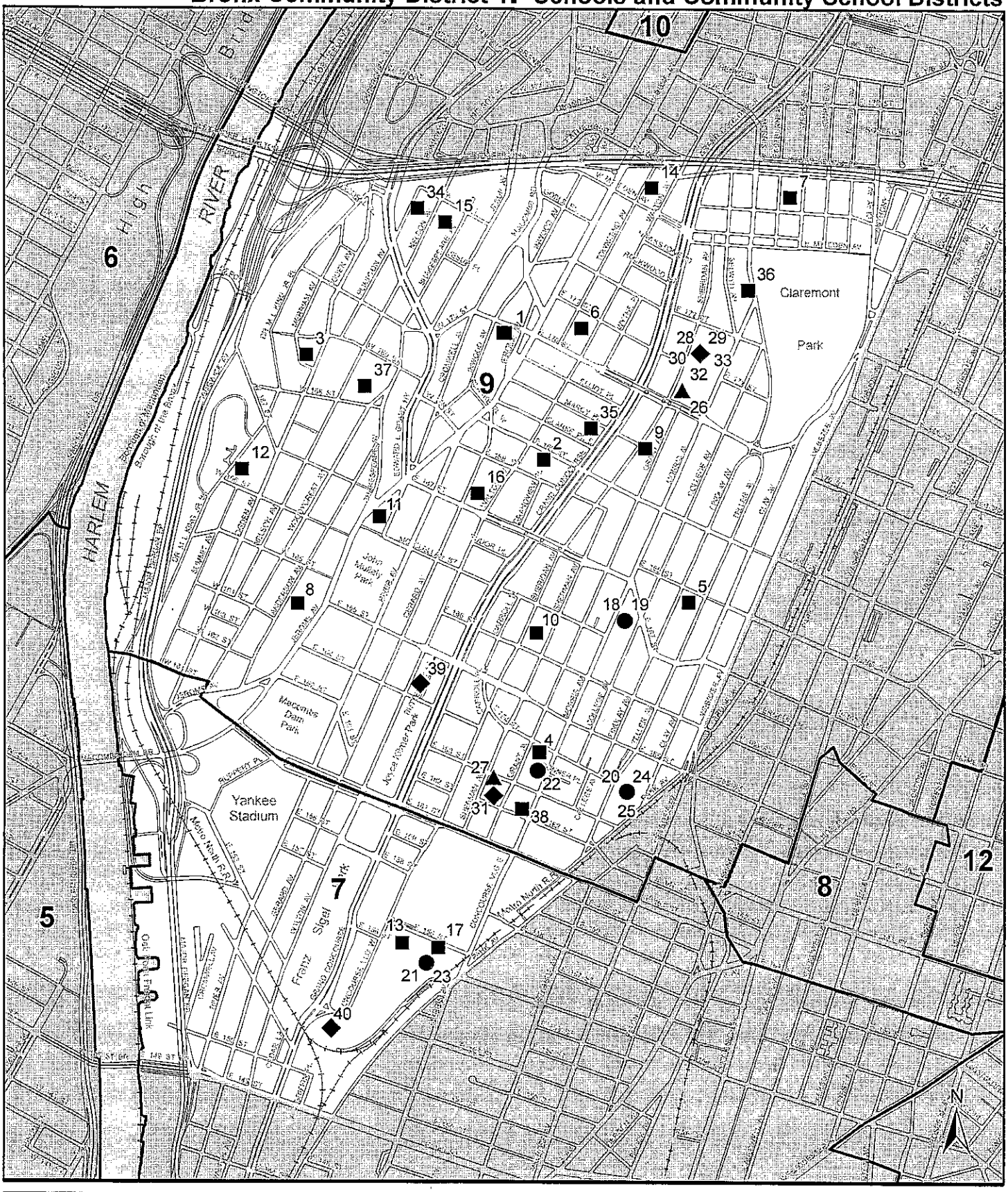
The City has broken its promises to the people of the South Bronx time and again. The replacement parks are nothing more than a grand scheme. Make no mistake, the groundwork for this scheme was laid with the deals over siting the water Filtration Plant in Van Cortland Park.

Parks used for Yankee Stadium:			
Macombs Dam (northen portion)	11.2	ac	track, soccer field, ball field
Macombs Dam (southern portion)	7.33	ac	ball fields, basketball & handball courts
Macombs Dam (southeast portion)	2.89	ac	asphalt ball field / parking
John Mullaly (southern portion)	3.89	ac	tennis & handball courts
total	***25.31***		
Replacement parks:			
'park" on garage 'A'	7.33		track, soccer, basketball & handball / playground
Ruppert Plaza	1.13		landscaped, pedestrian concrete walkway
Heritage Field	8.9		3 ball fields
passive park# 1 ~ 157th St	0.44		skate park
passive park# 2 ~ 157th St	0.24		playground
tennis concession ~ Harlem River	5.11		tennis courts / waterfront park
total	***23.15***		

taken from:

"Broken Promises: The City's Replacement Park Scheme For The New Yankee Stadium Project";
NYC Park Advocates

Bronx Community District 4: Schools and Community School Districts



9 School District Boundary & Number	■ Elementary Schools	● Middle Schools	◆ High Schools
1 School Key	▲ K-12 Schools & JHS/HS	★ Colleges/Universities	▼ Other Schools

Data Source: NYS Education Department, October 2006

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0 600 1,200 2,400 Feet

George Steinbrenner kicks children out of Macombs Dam & Mullaly parks in the South Bronx (2006). The image appeared on a community group's postcard addressed to City Council Speaker Christine Quinn, who ended up supporting the Yankees' land grab. Thousands of residents sent these cards imploring Quinn to save the parks.

NEW YORKERS FOR PARKS

City Council Oversight Hearing:
Status of Yankee Stadium Replacement Parks
Parks Committee

New Yorkers for Parks Testimony
June 24, 2008

Good morning. I am Sheelah Feinberg, Director of Government and Community Relations at New Yorkers for Parks, the only independent watchdog for all the city's parks, beaches, and playgrounds. For 100 years, New Yorkers for Parks has worked to ensure greener, safer, cleaner parks for all New Yorkers.

PARKLAND ALIENATION

Three years ago, Macomb's Dam Park and portions of Mullaly Park were alienated – or taken for a non-park use -- for the construction of the new Yankee Stadium. The 22 acres of parkland were alienated in eight days behind closed doors in a community that is already underserved by parkland and has some of the highest rates of asthma in the country. New Yorkers for Parks spoke out against this alienation and has worked to reform the alienation process. In particular, we continue to oppose the lack of public notification and public input in this case of parkland alienation. As a result, we have advocated increasing transparency.

In order to ensure that this does not happen again, New Yorkers for Parks has formed the Parkland Alienation Reform Coalition (PARC), which is made up of land use and environmental attorneys. After this alienation occurred, we requested and received an advisory opinion from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation that states that environmental review should take place before alienation can occur. Environmental review allows for public notice, hearings, and comment periods.

MITIGATION

These parks were the center of this underserved Bronx community and they cannot be easily replaced. The city is working to provide new facilities at equal acreage. However, many of these facilities will not serve the immediate community surrounding Yankee Stadium and will be extremely difficult to access. For example, reaching one of the replacement parks from the neighborhood requires a lengthy route that includes crossing the Major Deegan Expressway.

Unfortunately, due to the increase in construction costs, the community is also forced to wait longer than initially promised for the completion of these parks. With the high rate of obesity, diabetes and asthma in New York City, it is urgent that these recreational facilities be completed as soon as possible. There needs to be more oversight of the mitigation arrangements to ensure they carried it out according to agreed timetables.

ADDITIONAL FINANCING

In addition, as reported in the media, the Yankees are requesting additional public financing for the construction of the stadium. If the Yankees can give $29 million a year to A-ROD, and only $32 million to the community OVER 40 years, then we think they can also complete the financing of this project without increasing the financial burden to New Yorkers. The Yankees have money for championships, but sadly, it appears not for the community they play them in. We strongly urge that no further public funding or tax-exempt bonds be granted to the wealthiest sports team in the country.

Thank you.

GJNY

Good Jobs New York

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Testimony of Good Jobs New York

Bettina Damiani, Project Director

June 24, 2008

Before the New York City Council, Committee on Parks and Recreation

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Oversight – Status of Yankee Stadium Replacement Parks

Good afternoon Chairwoman Foster and members of the Committee. Thank you for inviting me to testify today regarding the replacement of parks taken for the new Yankee Stadium. My name is Bettina Damiani and I direct Good Jobs New York a project of the Fiscal Policy Institute with offices in New York City and Albany and Good Jobs First, based in Washington, DC.

For the past three years, Good Jobs New York has been a consistent critic of the undemocratic processes associated with the new Yankee Stadium project. This project was successful only because of a clandestine process by public officials that permitted the transfer of 22 acres of public park space to the New York Yankees. This also cleared the path for what has become an $800 million hit on the taxpayer. An itemized list of subsidies is attached.

Sadly, there is little the community or this council can do to return the park to its neighbors and the loss of public dollars to the taxpayer. However, park advocates will explain today how you can help to remedy the situation in this grossly underserved neighborhood and Good Jobs New York asks you to take steps to lessen the fiscal blow
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and to help ensure that the misguided policy of subsidizing sports facilities does not repeat itself.

Stand up against the team's demand for more subsidies

The Yankees, the wealthiest team in American sports, and only second in the world to the soccer team Manchester United, has managed to convince officials to give it nearly a billion dollars in tax breaks. In addition to getting tax-free bonds, the team will pay no rent and no property, sales or mortgage recording taxes on the new Yankee Stadium. This should leave the wealthiest team in baseball more than capable of paying the remaining costs associated with the completion of its new stadium. But it is asking for more.

The Yankees have reportedly requested an additional $350-$400 million in tax-free financing on top of the approximately $940 million the team received in 2006 from the New York City Industrial Development Agency, (IDA). In order for the team to obtain additional bonds, the Bloomberg Administration will again have to advocate for a change in the United State Internal Revenue Service code that would permit that these bonds to be used for a sports facility. This is in direct contradiction to the 1986 Tax Reform Act that denied federal financing of stadiums.

In 2007, the Bloomberg Administration, on behalf of the Yankees (and the Mets) managed to convince the IRS that its rules for how tax free bonds can be repaid are loosely defined and that the city should be allowed to publicly finance the construction of the new stadiums. The IRS code states bonds can only be paid back by funds that resemble taxes. But the baseball teams are repaying their bonds with PILOTS, which are Payments in *Lieu of Taxes.* What makes this public financing scheme particularly unique is the payments are structured towards the repayment of the bonds, not to what the taxes on the property would be.

It is frustrating to watch city officials spend significant efforts in Washington in an attempt to secure additional financing for a baseball team while the city has a litany of infrastructure and social needs. We urge you and the New York Congressional delegation to ask the IRS to deny further financing of sports facilities by filling this loophole.

Don't auction off future funds

In March of 2006 the New York City Industrial Development Agency estimated that the salvaging of the stadium would provide $10 million to the city.[i] We understand the costs associated with the demolition of such a stadium won't permit every part of the stadium to be eligible for auction. But, considering the New York Yankees are one of the most emblematic hometown sports teams in the world we hope the $10 million is a gross underestimate. We would appreciate any efforts by the council to investigate more recent estimates by the city to help create a clearer picture of the project's finances.

Any monies from auctioning off Yankee Stadium should be used to fill the budget gap at the Department of Parks and Recreation due to the Yankee project and establish a trust that would guarantee the future maintenance of the new recreational space and the remaining parks in the neighborhood. It should not be a monumental task – the current stadium is on city owned property making a strong case that the proceeds from its salvaging should go to the city, not the Yankees.

The New York City Economic Development Corporation is overseeing the auctioning off of parts of the old stadium. We encourage the EDC to make public the total value of proceeds from the auction and how much will go into the General Fund or to the Department of Parks and Recreation. We ask the council to request a detailed accounting from the EDC.

The $800,000 question

In a successful effort to gain zoning and other approvals from the council in 2006, the team promised to allocate $800,000 a year for 40 years to non-profit organizations in the Bronx. Yet, because of a slow start and political squabbles, only $12,000 has been allocated.[ii] It should be an easy lift for a percentage of $800,000 - or a new financial set aside from the team - to be contributed yearly to a parks trust to ensure their maintenance. For a team that manages a payroll of $200 million[iii], a small set aside for neighboring parks is not an unreasonable request.

Jobs promises opaque. Subsidies blurry.

The stadium project moved forward under the claim that it would create badly needed jobs in the Bronx. It is certainly true that the area needs good jobs, but there is little academic research that proves the development of stadiums creates permanent, good paying jobs (even less so for a stadium that is moving *across the street* from its current location as it is in this case). We urge you to investigate whether the Yankees' promise of hiring locally has been achieved. The Bloomberg Administration, as far as we know, has not confirmed the Yankees' claims that at least of quarter of jobs and contracts have gone to local residents and businesses.

GJNY has done extensive research to quantify the tremendous subsidies bestowed upon the Yankees. However some figures remain unclear. In particular, and what we hope will be clarified by today's hearing, are the exact cost overruns for the replacement and temporary parks in the area. Also, the estimated value of tax breaks associated with the approximate $940 million of tax exempt bonds varies by $100 million.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today.

[i] New York City Industrial Development Agency, March 9, 2006 Cost/Benefit Analysis for Yankees Ballpark Company.
[ii] Juan Gonzalez, "Bronx officials' deal with Yankees on stadium has become a joke", June 19, 2008 New York Daily News
[iii] ESPN, http://sports.espn.go.com/mlb/teams/salaries?team=nyy

Good Jobs New York

Taxpayer Subsidies for the
New Yankee Stadium and Parking Garages

Updated June, 2008

City Subsidies	Amount (millions)
Land/Infrastructure/Transit	$247.6-$280.8[1]
Forgone property taxes	$144.2[2]
Forgone sales taxes	$4.9[3]
Rent rebates	$13.4[4]
Forgone mortgage recording tax	$34.7[5]
Tax-exempt bonds for stadium (tax exemption on bond interest)	$5.4-$10[6]
Tax-exempt bonds for garages	$2.6[7]
City Total:	**$452.8-$490.6**
State Subsidies	
Garage construction/infra.	$70[8]
Maintenance funds	$4.7[9]
Forgone sales taxes	$5.4[10]
Forgone mortgage recording tax	?
Tax-exempt bonds for stadium	$10-$18.3[11]
Tax-exempt bonds for garages	$4.7
State Total:	**$94.8-$103.1**
MTA-Metro-North Station	**$51.2**
Federal Subsidies	
Tax-exempt bonds for stadium	$108-$200[12]
Tax-exempt bonds for garages	$51
Federal Total:	**$159-$251**
Total	**$757.8-$895.9**

[1] The lower figure is from the FY09 Executive Capital Budget Hearing for the Parks Department, available at: http://www.council.nyc.gov/html/budget/execbriefings/FY09Exec_Capital_DPR.pdf. The higher figure is from the NYC Economic Development Corporation, as reported on fieldofschemes.com by Neil deMause.
[2] Independent Budget Office, "Update to IBO's Analysis of the Financing for the Proposed Yankee Stadium," April, 2006.
[3] New York City Economic Development Corporation Annual Investment Projects Report, FY 2007
[4] Yankee Stadium Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).
[5] New York City Economic Development Corporation Annual Investment Projects Report, FY 2007
[6] The lower figure is from the NYC EDC Annual Investment Project Report, FY 2007. The higher figure is the Independent Budget Office's revised estimate, August 2007. We are awaiting confirmation on which figure is more accurate.
[7] The figure listed in the Industrial Development Agency Cost-Benefit Analysis for Bronx Parking Development Company, September 6, 2007, is $2.576 million. State and Federal figures for tax exempt garage bonds were estimated by GJNY.
[8] MOU, ESDC GPP
[9] Ibid.
[10] Calculated by GJNY based off of the forgone city sales tax as reported in the NYC EDC Annual Investment Projects Report, FY 2007. Figure includes forgone sales tax to the MTA.
[11] The lower number was calculated by GJNY based off of the forgone bond interest as reported in the NYC EDC Annual Investment Projects Report, FY 2007. The higher figure is the Independent Budget Office's revised estimate, August 2007. We are awaiting confirmation on which figure is more accurate.
[12] Ibid.

SUSTAINABLE SOUTH BRONX

June 24, 2008

Testimony to the City Council Committee on Parks and Recreation
Status of Yankee Stadium Replacement Parks

Erin Jarvis
Active Living Coordinator
Sustainable South Bronx

Thank you Council Member Foster and the City Council Committee on Parks and Recreation for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Erin Jarvis, and I am Active Living Coordinator for Sustainable South Bronx. Sustainable South Bronx is an environmental justice organization working in the South Bronx that promotes innovative, economically sustainable projects that are informed by community needs. As an organization that has had a key role in the design, construction and maintenance of two new waterfront parks in Hunts Point, we also understand the importance of parks to the Highbridge community. We are here today to express our concern with respect to the accessibility and safety of the planned replacement parks, and the impact of construction delays.

Our first concern is that the replacement parks will not offer residents the same value, in terms of accessibility and safety, as Macombs Dam Park. This park offered centrally located, accessible green space and opportunities for physical exercise for residents in a neighborhood facing obesity and asthma rates that are among the highest in the city. The new parks, on the other hand, are small, scattered, and in some cases inaccessible to the neighborhood; some are planned to be constructed on top of parking garages that will be closed for all Yankee home games, while

others will be constructed across the Major Deegan Expressway. While PlaNYC states that all New Yorkers should have a park within a 10-minute walk, thus far the City has created only one replacement park (a temporary one at that) within a mile of the original park. While the parkland of Macombs Dam Park helped to address the environmental and public health problems in the South Bronx, the absence and inaccessibility of the replacement parks serves to further worsen these problems. We recommend that the replacement parks be as accessible as possible through measures including, though not limited to, enhanced street design (such as using trees planted through Million Trees Initiative to create a "greenway" that connects the parks with one another and the residential neighborhood), traffic calming (including traffic lights that last long enough to safely allow all pedestrians to cross the street to get to the parks) , effective signage, enhanced street lighting, public outreach, and availability on Yankee game days.

Secondly, we are concerned that the parks are not being constructed in a timely manner. In 2006, when the plan for Yankee Stadium was approved, the city said in its environmental impact report that construction of all but one of the eight replacement parks would be completed by April of 2009. Many of these parks are not near completion, and the construction dates of others have been delayed by more than a year. In the interim, the community suffers even more restricted access to park space and physical activity than before the demolition of Macombs Dam Park, and rapidly rising construction costs will consume an increasing percentage of the already limited city budget. While Yankee Stadium, a project receiving tax exempt bond financing support from the City, will be completed in time for opening day 2009, the replacement parks are not scheduled to be complete until 2011. This is unacceptable. We recommend that the City Council Committee on Parks and Recreation urge the Mayor and Parks Department to complete

the replacement parks by their initially proposed completion date. We also recommend that the construction of parks that have not met their deadline be initiated immediately to ensure that all parks, with funding for maintenance, are completed and accessible before the end of this year.

Third, we are concerned that many of the new parks will use an artificial turf that contains toxic industrial chemicals and has questionable health impact on park users. While we advocate for the construction of parkland, their materials should not risk the health of the users whom these parks are intended to benefit. We recommend that the City only use materials that we know are safe; artificial turf does not meet this standard. The use of artificial turf as opposed to vegetated surfaces exacerbates the urban heat island effect, which worsens air quality and asthma, and increases stormwater runoff, which contributes to combined sewer overflows. This pollution is inconsistent with PLANYC goals, such as improved air and water quality. Only by planting and maintaining vegetation at these parks will it be possible to work toward PLANYC goals and approach replacing the initial value of Macombs Dam Park. Maintenance should be invested in by the city, which will then create more jobs for city residents.

In conclusion, thank you for this opportunity to illuminate the need for these parks to be constructed as soon as possible in a safe and accessible manner. We encourage you to continue to raise the profile of this issue and hold the Mayor accountable until construction of all parks is complete. The public's money is being spent, so it is the public that should be seeing the benefits. Having parks three years from now will not make up for the parkland we lost two years ago!

City of New York
Parks & Recreation

New York City Council
Committee on Parks & Recreation

Oversight – Status of Yankee Stadium Replacement Parks

June 24, 2008

Testimony by
Liam Kavanagh, First Deputy Commissioner

INTRODUCTION

Mayor Bloomberg's vision for a revitalized South Bronx, called the 'South Bronx Initiative,' is a multi-agency effort developed in coordinated with local city, state and federal elected officials, along with the support of local community groups. The Yankee Stadium Redevelopment Program, a major element of the South Bronx Initiative, includes over $2 billion of public and private dollars for new infrastructure, retail, professional sports and entertainment, mass transit, parks, athletic facilities and greening. Even in the midst of a massive redevelopment project the community played host to the recent Papal visit and will again be on the national stage with the All Star Game next month. We are here today to discuss the open space component of the redevelopment plan, specifically the new parks, facilities and greening initiatives undertaken as part of the broader redevelopment program.

New York City is currently in the largest period of park expansion since Robert Moses and the WPA projects of the 1930s. In the Bronx, new and renovated parks are transforming communities and improving the quality of life. More than $178 million has been invested since 2002 in Bronx park improvements including new waterfront parks, greenways, and recreational facilities. Over the next few years, the City will spend roughly over $400 million to develop nearly 150 different park projects in the Bronx, including those connected to the Yankee Stadium Redevelopment Program.

PUBLIC REDEVELOPMENT AND CITY PARKS PROJECTS

The City is investing $281 million to build new parks, improve local sport fields, upgrade roadways, utilities and related infrastructure, and improve public transit through its contribution to the new MTA Metro-North Station. Parks is building new recreational facilities that will include new grass ballfields where the stadium once stood, an all-weather soccer and football field surrounded by a 400-meter competition quality track, basketball courts, handball courts, a new tennis center, a skate park and a waterfront park that will provide the first meaningful public access to the Harlem River since highways and rail lines were built along the river's edge. The park program alone is budgeted at $174 million, allowing us to plan and build great new parks and facilities that will serve the surrounding community for decades to come. As with all park

projects, the public, particularly those who use the parks on a regular basis are involved in creating the designs for the new parks, as are members of Community Board 4 and local elected officials. In addition, we attend both the Parks Committee and full board meetings of Community Board Four each month to make presentations, provide updates and answer questions. We also host a monthly coordinating meeting for government agencies and elected officials, issue a quarterly newsletter and maintain a website to provide current information on the progress of the park replacement plan.

NEW RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

The recreation facilities displaced by the new stadium were confined to two parks: sixteen tennis and eight handball courts in Mullaly Park; and, two little league ballfields, a 400 meter running track and soccer field, one softball field, one little league field, two basketball courts and twenty-four handball courts in Macombs Dam Park.

The replacement park sites are comprised of both existing parkland that is being redeveloped, and newly mapped parkland. In the new Macombs Dam Park, atop Garage A, we will build four basketball courts, eight handball courts, a 400 meter running track, an all-weather soccer/football field, an adult fitness area and a comfort station. The latter will also provide also provide needed storage space for maintenance equipment and supplies, as well as support space for local Parks Department staff. Replacing what was once a marginal road, Ruppert Plaza, will become an important public plaza and gateway to Heritage Field. This location, the site of the original stadium, will have one grass softball field, one grass little league field and a tournament quality grass baseball field oriented to mirror the historic Yankee ballfield.

River Avenue Park will see new benches, spray shower, play & fitness equipment, as well as a skate park. Along the Bronx Terminal Market waterfront, a new park will contain tennis courts, a parks district office, tennis concession and café in Building "J", an ice rink, a beach, barbeque and picnic area, as well as an outdoor classroom. This new waterfront park will be connected to its surrounding community across a new pedestrian bridge from Ruppert Plaza that will be wider, and better lit than the old bridge. Most importantly, it will be open year-round and connect to a brand new metro North Station.

BUDGET

I know this committee and members of the public are particularly interested in the costs of this project and the schedule for building the new parks. As mentioned earlier in the testimony the construction budget for the park component of the project is $174 million, substantially higher than the first cost projections, but a concrete demonstration of the City's commitment to fully rebuild the parks and facilities displaced by the new stadium. For the total project, which includes non-parks related infrastructure improvements, the budget was originally $160 million. Since then, $121 million of funding has been added to Parks Capital budget to address the following needs: $57 million in additional funds for park development work; $9 million for infrastructure work, $16 million added for project and program management, design and administration and $39 million for the MTA Metro North Station and pedestrian bridge. There are three reasons for the cost increases. First, the scope of the project has grown substantially

since it was first announced; second, site conditions and environmental remediation have been significantly more challenging than first anticipated; and third, the super-heated construction market continues to push costs higher and higher.

The scope has expanded in ways that provide more and better facilities and services to the public. Building "J", the handsome old powerhouse structure that sits on the Harlem River, has been added to the Waterfront Park to provide a headquarters for our Community Board 4 Operations staff, space to host a tennis concession and other public uses. Pier 4 was added to the park plan creating more waterfront access and the demolition of the decrepit "Victory" building was not part of the original plan for the site. The pedestrian bridge that provided access to and from the parking lots on game days only was only intended to be renovated and made ADA compliant. It will now be three times as wide and open around-the-clock to connect the community to the new Metro North station, retail outlets and the Waterfront Park. Heritage Field has grown by ¾ of an acre from what was originally envisioned. The initial plan called for two temporary ballfields along the waterfront while construction of the new Waterfront Park was underway. Though well meant, the idea proved impractical for a number of reasons. Rather than abandon it, the City decided to provide two new permanent ballfields, at PS 29 and the West Bronx Recreation Center, at a cost substantially higher the temporary fields.

The earliest construction cost projections were made using industry standards for materials and commodities and comparable costs for similar projects. However, site conditions, environmental mitigation and the unique nature of some of these properties have resulted in higher estimates than were originally projected. The Waterfront Park site had 10 underground oil tanks rather than the four shown on the survey resulting in significantly higher mitigation costs. The seawall and subsurface require significant new infrastructure to support the park program. Building J needed a full environmental remediation. The first demolition estimates for the stadium were based on industry standards, but the stadium is anything but a typical structure and its proximity to two major subway lines makes the project even more complex. And even the two new permanent ballfields had unanticipated site and environmental issues that raised the total cost of construction.

With international demand for petroleum-based projects and basic construction commodities at an all time and local demand for construction services pushing supply limits, construction costs continue to outpace even the most liberal estimates. Overall cost escalation of 1.5% per month is now common in public and private construction across the city- a rate of increase that like the price at the pump, was hard to imagine just a short time ago. And while we constantly update our estimating methods, each new publicly-bid project seems to raise the bar higher in terms of construction costs.

SCHEDULE

I am happy to report that we are delivering on our commitment to provide new parks and facilities for residents of this community. The interim track and field has been open for over a year now and will remain open until a track and field on top of Garage A is available for public use. Though final version of the rooftop park will be constructed in two phases, public use will be preserved throughout the process. The PS 29 ballfield opened in April and the field at the West Bronx Recreation Center will open in a matter of weeks. Improvements to the northern

portion of Mullaly Park are complete and construction has begun on the southern portion of the park. The pool and skate park will operate as normal during construction. Work will begin on the two new River Avenue parks in August and will be completed next spring. So far over 3,000of the 8,000 new trees committed to replace those lost to construction have been planted on streets of the Bronx. Heritage Field and the new Rupert Place, the centerpiece of the park replacement plan, can't begin construction until the existing stadium is removed next year. It is still expected to open in the fall of 2011. The Waterfront Park is in construction and we expect it to be available for public use a year from now, in line with the original schedule. The renovation of Building "J" will take longer, probably until the end of 2009, but again that was not part of the original scope for the project. Garage "A", which will support the rooftop park, began construction in 2007, a year later than originally anticipated, but the recreational facilities that were ultimately displaced by construction remained open to the public during the delay and they should not be out-of service any longer than originally anticipated. The rooftop on Garage "A" is expected to be completed by 2010.

You may hear today various calculations of acreage associated with this project. We want to assure you that the project we are building today replaces all of the park space being taken up by the new stadium and its parking garages. Most importantly, we want to assure you that all of the recreation facilities that were displaced- all of the sport fields and play areas- have been accounted for and are being replaced in ongoing consultation with the community. The clearest evidence of this is visible from an image of the Preferred Alternative as it appeared in the Yankee Stadium FEIS. It is the image the community saw through various public meetings. It is the image the Planning Commission and Council had before at the time of their final votes.

We invite you to inspect this image closely. You will find that every element of the plan that was approved remains in our project today. Every recreational element and every parcel of parkland remains as in the project without exception. In fact, the only changes you will find to the project we are building today are the addition of the PS29 and West Bronx Recreation sites and that the locations of some recreational elements within the plan have changed.

CONCLUSION

In closing, this is an unprecedented time for both park and private sector development in the Bronx. The benefits of the Yankee Redevelopment Project are significant, including new parkland and state-of-the-art recreational facilities by top designers working closely local residents and user groups. No great urban development project comes without temporary disruptions to normal routines. We appreciate the patience and support Bronx residents and local officials , have shown in dealing with the issues and inconveniences associated with the rebuilding of Yankee Stadium and the construction of new parks in the community and I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.