



**Hearing before the New York City Council
Committee on Parks & Recreation
Fiscal Year 2025 Preliminary Budget
March 21, 2024**

Testimony By: Sue Donoghue, Commissioner, NYC Parks

Good afternoon, Chair Krishnan, members of the Parks Committee, and other members of the Council.

My name is Sue Donoghue, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, and I am pleased to be here today to testify, joined by members of my incredible senior staff. As always, I want to thank the Council for its continued support for our city's open spaces over the past year and for championing the importance of parks for all New Yorkers. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to discuss the agency's Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2025, and to provide an overview of our agency's mission to build and maintain our city's green and open spaces.

Though most New Yorkers are very familiar with our robust and diverse park system, not everyone is aware of the full array of properties, programs, amenities and facilities that make up NYC Parks' portfolio. Our agency plans, maintains, and cares for over 30,000 acres of green and open space, encompassing 5,000 individual properties, ranging from playgrounds and beaches to community gardens and natural areas, and over 5.7 million trees. These properties span the entire city, from Great Kills Park on the eastern shore of Staten Island, to Marine Park in Brooklyn, to Idlewild Park in Queens, to Riverside Park in Manhattan, to Orchard Beach, often called "The Riviera of the Bronx." We provide thousands of recreational and educational public programs throughout the year, including free Shape Up NYC fitness classes hosted in locations all over the city, Kids In Motion children's programming led by our Playground Associates, and nature education provided by our incredible Urban Park Rangers.

Throughout our city's history, parks have provided vital and restorative spaces for New Yorkers to exercise, enjoy themselves with family and friends, find solace, or just relish some sorely needed quiet time and solitude. Though we are moving farther and farther away from the COVID pandemic that drastically changed New Yorkers' relationships to their parks and open spaces, the aftereffects are still being felt across the five boroughs. As mental health issues such as loneliness are on the rise, access to



green, open spaces is only increasing in importance. Though our City and agency continue to face significant challenges, I am extremely proud of the hard work and dedication exhibited by our incredible Parkies as they work together to grow, maintain, and program a world-class park system, prioritizing equity, access, safety and nature for all. I'm pleased to report that the past year has been a very productive one for our agency, and our dedication to our core mission is stronger than ever.

This past year, we launched "Let's Green NYC" – a strategic initiative to engage a record number of volunteers in city parks through the end of 2024, improving the health of New Yorkers and their green spaces. Through this program, NYC Parks is celebrating and renewing our commitment to the hundreds of diverse volunteer groups who actively care for greenspaces and engage thousands of new volunteers to help enhance our parks and our city's environment. Through the initiative, we have partnered with the Broadway show "Wicked" and WE♥NYC to enhance the profile of volunteer events and attract theater fans to help beautify their parks. We've also developed a new "Let's Green NYC" website where New Yorkers can browse a directory of over 100 active volunteer groups all over the city, who are looking to get more people involved in cleaning and beautifying our city's green and open space. In Calendar Year 2023, we engaged over 410,000 volunteers in stewardship and engagement activities, and we greatly appreciate this incredible outpouring of support.

This enthusiasm from the public is a tremendous supplement to the dedication and hard work of our Maintenance & Operations staff, who are out in our parks every day, keeping them clean and safe for people to enjoy. The Preliminary Mayor's Management Report for Fiscal Year 2024 reported an 88% rating for the Overall Condition of our parks and a 94% rating for Cleanliness, each metric reflecting a 4-point increase over the same time period a year earlier. Our Operations and Citywide Services staff are also making targeted repairs and improvements to park facilities, such as installing diaper changing stations in more park restrooms, so that families with young children have increased access to the amenities they need. I'm pleased to report that, in accordance with Local Law 56 of 2023, we have installed these new amenities in nearly every park restroom where a changing station can feasibly be installed, several years in advance of the statutory deadline.



In Fiscal Year 2023, our capially-funded tree planting program planted close to 14,500 trees along streets and in landscaped parks, the highest total in the past six fiscal years. This program is on pace to plant over 17,000 trees in FY24, largely due to our expanded focus on engaging additional M/WBE contractors for tree planting. We continue to strategically and equitably focus our tree planting efforts on heat-vulnerable neighborhoods and as we enter the spring planting season, our efforts will continue to prioritize greening the city and planting trees where it's needed most.

This past year, our Parks Capital team remained hard at work, making sure our park improvement projects were completed on time and as quickly as possible. As reported in the Fiscal Year 2024 Preliminary Mayor's Management Report statistics for construction, Parks completed 53 projects in the first quarter, 19 of which were completed ahead of schedule. We look forward to continuing this upward trajectory as the fiscal year nears its completion. As part of the city's commitment to expanding open space access and recreation to historically underserved communities, we reopened Corporal Fischer Park in the Bronx, renovated Monsignor Kett Playground in Manhattan, and unveiled an incredible new facility in Queens, the Alley Pond Environmental Center, the design for which demonstrates our strong commitment to sustainability. We are also collaborating with our colleagues at the New York City Department of Design & Construction to advance major park facility projects, including groundbreakings for two brand-new state-of-the-art recreation centers, Mary Cali Dalton in Staten Island and Shirley Chisholm in Brooklyn.

In October, alongside the Mayor's Office, the New York City Department of Transportation and the New York City Economic Development Corporation, we kicked off a historic expansion of our city's greenways, which are critical in filling gaps in the outer-borough greenway network. This expansion will create 60 miles of greenway corridors and more than 40 miles of new protected bike infrastructure, a major investment that complements the expansion of the Harlem River Greenway, which will connect Randall's Island to Van Cortlandt Park, and the recently completed East Midtown Greenway. Earlier this month, we were thrilled to announce that the City will be the recipient of a \$117 million dollar competitive federal grant to further develop the QueensWay, a new public park being built along a vacant rail corridor. Thanks to this major federal investment secured through the hard work of the Adams administration, this



innovative project will create a new signature park in the heart of Queens, transforming an abandoned rail line into a vibrant greenspace where New Yorkers can enjoy all the health benefits of time outdoors. With over a mile of new greenway paths for pedestrians and cyclists, the QueensWay will connect neighborhoods and give New Yorkers a new way to get out and safely enjoy the fresh air.

We were able to leverage additional federal funding through the USDA Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations Program, which awarded more than \$46 million dollars to implement critical on-site infrastructure improvements and increase water access for more than 200 food-producing GreenThumb community gardens across the city. We are currently in the planning phase for this effort and look forward to working with our Federal partners to begin advancing project work as soon as possible.

We have also begun to offer expanded public programming at Hart Island in the Bronx, which serves as the City's public cemetery and is the final resting place for over one million individuals. Operation of the island has fully transferred to our agency and the Human Resources Administration, and we are committed to ensuring that visitors to this solemn resting place have a meaningful and positive experience. In addition to facilitating gravesite visitation for the loved ones of those buried on the island, we are pleased to offer thoughtfully curated tours of the island led by our knowledgeable Urban Park Rangers, helping New Yorkers learn more about the island's unique past, present and future.

Despite significant operational challenges, 2023 was a very successful summer season for NYC Parks, with millions of visitors coming out to enjoy our beaches and pools. We launched our lifeguard recruitment efforts for the 2024 beach and pool season late last year and are well underway in our training and certification process to make the upcoming season as successful as possible. We were pleased to recently announce that the City has reached an agreement on an increased hourly wage of \$22.00 an hour for seasonal lifeguards, as well as a \$1,000 bonus for all returning lifeguards that work through peak season. We've continued to explore every avenue to recruit and retain more qualified lifeguards for the 2024 season, including increasing opportunities for potential lifeguards to test and qualify. While the hiring process for lifeguards is still ongoing, we remain optimistic about making the 2024 beach and pool season the best it can be.



Turning to the specific topic for this hearing, the Fiscal Year 2025 Preliminary expense operating budget for NYC Parks is \$583.7 million dollars, demonstrating the Administration's ongoing commitment to promoting equitable investments in a greener, healthier city, and giving our Agency the resources we need to continue getting the job done. Though the budget reflects some of the difficult decisions that had to be made to demonstrate fiscal responsibility amid the ongoing economic challenges facing the city, this budget will allow us to continue delivering core services and keeping our city parks clean and safe.

I'll close by noting some of the initial findings from a large-scale study that was recently conducted in partnership with CUNY. The Physical Activity and Redesigned Community Spaces study, or PARCS, focused on the public health impacts of the Community Parks Initiative, also known as CPI, our signature equity-driven investment program through which we are enhancing parks and playgrounds in underserved neighborhoods. According to the study, New Yorkers living near a CPI-renovated park were 66% more likely to have recently visited their park than New Yorkers living near non-renovated parks. The CUNY study also found that all New Yorkers can benefit from having an improved park in their neighborhood, thanks to quality-of-life improvements that uplift the entire community. Activating parks with community programming and amenities correlates with increased park usage, engaging more New Yorkers in their local greenspaces. Parks and community greenspaces have historically fulfilled a basic human need for connection—to self, family, and friends; to community and neighborhood; and to nature. Indeed, many study participants described connecting with nature as an important motivator for visiting their local parks. As a further demonstration of the success of this approach, we were thrilled to announce twenty additional parks that will receive significant investment through CPI in 2024 and 2025, a total investment of over \$100 million across all five boroughs.

I want to thank Mayor Adams for granting me the incredible privilege of leading this agency, and the opportunity to work with each of you to continue improving our parks and open spaces for all New Yorkers. Many of you are very familiar with our incredible Borough Commissioners and their district teams, who work alongside our dedicated central agency division staff to deliver for New Yorkers every day. We are always available to answer questions and address concerns from your offices and are happy to hear your thoughts on any topic, whether it regards a local park in your district or a citywide



NYC Parks

agency policy. NYC Parks looks forward to continuing our close partnership with the Council, in order to create a bright, green future with a more equitable, inclusive and resilient parks system. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today, we would now be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Manhattan Community Board Five

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March 20, 2024

The City Council of New York
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To Members of the City Council Parks and Recreation Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment during this budgeting process. The Parks and Public Spaces Committee of Community Board Five (CB5) strongly urges the Council to allocate the required \$8,420,000 to the Parks and Recreation Department to begin the Capital Improvement process to replace the interior pathways, the water lines and irrigation for Union Square Park. We write to you representing residents, businesses, students, and visitors to the park.

We love Union Square Park. It anchors our district with verdant and invigorating open space; provides us with a culinary center hosting the most established farmer's market in the city; serves as a gateway for those arriving from the other boroughs; generates economic prosperity as a hub for offices and creative workspaces; and provides both educational space and dormitories for two of the city's top universities. Union Square is not only one of the city's most intensely utilized parks and public spaces, but it is also a vital transit hub connecting the entire city. This project is an opportunity to safeguard access to and enjoyment of the park, as well as protect the subway system atop which the park serves as a de facto green roof.

The paving work and drainage system of the Park in Union Square is in dire need of repair. We know this from first hand visits to the park, where we have seen flooding, sinkholes, and damage to the paving stones. Installing new water lines and irrigation is essential to the basic functioning of the park. Broken drain pipes significantly contribute to the deterioration of the interior paved surfaces of the park. During any precipitation event, previously undetected breaks create new sinkholes and dangerously uneven paved surfaces as rain washes park soil down the drains and buried streams.

Currently the drainage issue in the park causes more than minor flooding. The amount of water pooling in the center of the park and along the walkways present risks not only to park infrastructure and visitors, but to the bustling subway station below. Pipe breakage has repeatedly caused water to be cut off to the park, leaving drinking fountains and the dog run without the water necessary to function. Members of the community who use the Union Square Park Dog Run have noted that they have at times raised funds to make temporary repairs so that they can use this vital community service.

The water outages are put in place to protect the Subway station below serving the 4, 5, 6, L, N, Q, R, and W lines; but given heavier rains and the state of the drainage system, there is a risk flooding could enter the station below and disrupt service. Rather than focus on worst case scenarios, we invite the Council to join us in envisioning and building the best case one: a Union Square Park that we have enhanced with improved drainage and irrigation, expanded accessibility, better protected transit, less congestion, and increased capacity for all.

The Parks and Public Spaces Committee of CB5 is particularly supportive of this capital improvement as an essential component of the USPNext Vision Plan. We look forward to providing community feedback to the Department of Parks and Recreation during the design phase of this indispensable capital project. Our community is passionate about making improvements to Union Square, including improvements to the accessibility of and access to the park's lawns and open spaces to more people regardless of mobility or ability challenges. We ask the council membership to support the capital improvements needed to bring the park into good repair, update and expand upon accessibility, and establish the essential foundation of the USPNext Vision Plan.

Unfortunately, it is all too easy to delay and defer investment in necessary infrastructure maintenance and updates, particularly for those that are buried out of sight, beneath the ground. We urge the council to recognize the value and importance of Union Square to the city as a whole and to commit the necessary funds for this capital project.

Sincerely,



Samir Lavingia
Chair



Craig Slutzkin
Chair, Parks & Public Spaces



**New York City Council
FY25 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Parks and Recreation
Committee on Parks and Recreation
March 21, 2024**

Testimony By: Emily Walker, Natural Areas Conservancy, Senior Manager of External Affairs

My name is Emily Walker, and I am the Senior Manager of External Affairs at the Natural Areas Conservancy (NAC). Thank you to Chair Krishnan and the members of the Committee on Parks and Recreation for the opportunity to submit comments today about the Preliminary FY25 Budget for NYC Parks.

As NYC's champion for our urban forested natural areas and wetlands, our testimony will focus on the core funding priorities for FY25 that would have the most impact on the care, management, restoration, and programming of our 20,000 acres of natural areas.

We stand in solidarity with our partners in the Play Fair and Forest for All NYC Coalitions in calling for the city to increase its investment in the workforce for NYC Parks. We believe that New Yorkers deserve a fully funded, safe, clean, green, and resilient parks system. In order to achieve those goals, we ask for the following:

- **The budget for NYC Parks must be restored, and we call for an end to the hiring freeze placed on the agency.** For too long, our Parks colleagues have been asked to do more with less. This is particularly problematic in the realm of natural areas management, which often takes many years of targeted care and restoration.
- **We ask that the Administration restore the \$2.4M in baselined Trails Formalization funding,** which was announced as a signature priority of the Administration on Earth Day 2023. This funding would establish a citywide team of 26 to improve our 300-mile network of nature trails. This work supports access to 10,000 acres of forested natural areas, and helps protect the health of these spaces by reducing forest fragmentation and ecosystem disturbance, and helping to manage invasive species.
- **We ask that the \$2.5M added by the City Council for FY24 to support the continuation of 51 critical Natural Areas management positions be renewed and baselined.** The benefits provided by our forested natural areas are many, including cleaning our air, absorbing stormwater, and storing nearly 70% of NYC's carbon. These natural areas are critical public infrastructure, and we call on the City to appropriately invest in the workforce that performs the important work of caring for these spaces.
- **We ask that the 50 Urban Park Ranger positions set to expire at the end of June be renewed and baselined.** The Rangers provide public education and interpretive programming about our local ecosystems, perform vital wildlife management, and provide enforcement services that make our natural areas safer and more accessible to more New Yorkers. Similar to recreation centers and fitness facilities, programming in our natural areas serves to activate these park spaces and welcome New Yorkers.



- **We ask the Administration and the Council to ensure that there are resources in place to support the successful creation of the NYC Urban Forest Plan as required by Local Law 148.** We believe that in order to create the most successful plan possible, the City must commit funding for a robust, multi-agency planning process, including sufficient funding for a rigorous community engagement effort that will lead to the creation of the plan by the July 31, 2025 deadline.

Thank you again for your leadership and for the opportunity to express our support for increased investment in NYC Parks and their natural areas.



**Testimony for the NYC Council Committee on Parks and Recreation
Tami Lin-Moges, Interim Cities Director, The Nature Conservancy, New York
March 21, 2024**

My name is Tami Lin-Moges and I am the Interim Director of The Nature Conservancy's Cities Program in New York. The Nature Conservancy is the world's largest conservation organization, and our diverse staff and more than 400 scientists conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends. We impact conservation in 76 countries and territories, directly and with partners. We have 90,000 members across New York, 35,000 of whom are in New York City. We advance strategies that create a healthy, resilient, and sustainable urban environment and are committed to improving New York City's air, land, and water to sustain and support the people and nature of this great city.

In New York City, we convene the [Forest for All NYC](#) coalition and we are leading practitioners on the science and policy of the NYC urban forest. In 2021, we published the [State of the Urban Forest in NYC](#) (SUFNYC) a comprehensive assessment of the local urban forest, and with Forest for All NYC, released the [NYC Urban Forest Agenda](#), a collaborative roadmap that provides detailed recommendations to meaningfully protect, maintain, expand, research, and promote the NYC urban forest to benefit all New Yorkers justly and equitably. We also conducted an analysis of local [tree canopy potential](#) that shows the feasibility of expanding canopy cover in every neighborhood across the city.

I am here today on behalf of The Nature Conservancy and as a proud member of Forest for All NYC and the Play Fair Coalition to testify regarding the FY25 Executive Budget. We call for dedicating 1% of the City budget for the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation and to fully fund the NYC urban forest. I first want to acknowledge and express gratitude for the endorsement that the Mayor and his Administration, as well as most Councilmembers, including Chair Krishnan, have made of a goal of at least 30 percent canopy cover citywide. Last session, Forest for All NYC was proud to work alongside the sponsors of Local Laws 135 and 148 of 2023 and advocate for their successful and unanimous passage. I want to express deep gratitude to City Council for its leadership in advancing these important bills to monitor, protect, and grow the New York City tree canopy to 30 percent cover in an equitable way. To achieve the goals of these laws, especially Local Law 148 that mandated the creation of a NYC Urban Forest Plan, we must prioritize funding for the urban forest.

The urban forest includes not just the trees and their canopy, but also their physical infrastructure, such as tree beds and soil, the accompanying biodiversity, and a rich social infrastructure, such as the people who dedicate their careers and free time to it. The urban forest includes over 7 million trees, with their canopy covering 22% of the city as of 2017. It spans the whole of the city, crossing jurisdictions and owners, and can be found on our streets, private backyards, New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) campuses, City parks, schools, institutions, and other sites.

The urban forest provides substantial, meaningful benefits including for mental and physical health, educational outcomes, job creation, community cohesion, energy burden reduction, climate resilience, carbon storage, and as monuments or cultural symbols. Achieving Forest for All NYC's visionary goal of 30% canopy by 2035 (30x35) will increase these benefits and distribute them in a more equitable way. (See Ch. 4 of SUFNYC). [Research published in 2018 by the US Department of Agriculture \(USDA\) Forest Service](#) for the urban forest as a whole

indicates that its benefits and services of carbon sequestration and mitigation, air pollution removal, avoided stormwater runoff, and reduced energy costs to be worth well over \$260 million per year, and the cost to replace this resource if lost would be about \$5.7 billion.

Many of the benefits and services of the NYC urban forest, especially temperature reduction and shading, are increasingly important with climate change. The New York City Panel on Climate Change (NPCC) has projected increased temperatures in general for NYC in [its 2019 report](#), with more frequent and longer heat waves. Further, as reported in [2023 New York City Heat-Related Mortality Report](#), an average of 350 New Yorkers already die prematurely because of hot weather. Stormwater management will similarly become increasingly important in the future, as the 2019 NPCC report projected an increasing number of days with heavy rainfall (≥ 1 "), increasing the need for local flood management strategies.

There are severe inequities in the spatial distribution of the NYC urban forest, and thus meaningful disparities in terms of where benefits and services are provisioned and to whom. In general, areas with lower income residents and higher proportions of people of color, and ultimately more socially and heat-vulnerable communities, tend to have less canopy than other areas, and should be prioritized for potential expansion for the urban forest (see Ch. 4 of SUFNYC). These areas also frequently are the subject of environmental hazards, such as high air pollution, and the disparities are a meaningful environmental justice concern. To achieve long-term growth and canopy increases, trees require ongoing care and protection alongside additional plantings. Further, it is critical that investments in greening the landscape be carried out in ways that align with community visions, elevate community leadership, and work to avoid potential adverse impacts on the existing residents, such as economic displacement or gentrification.

Public funding dedicated to the NYC urban forest and parks is insufficient and has been heavily variable. Despite the urban forest's essential role in the health and resiliency of our city, it has faced chronic underfunding and has been vulnerable to disproportionate cuts during times of financial hardship. The NYC Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) is responsible for 53.5% of tree canopy in NYC, but only received an annual average of 0.34% of the total City Other than Personal Services (OTPS) expense budget from FY18 to FY22. The portion allocated to urban forestry work was only 0.04% of the total City OTPS expense budget (or an average of \$23 million per year, adjusted for inflation to 2021 dollars). This funding limits critical maintenance activities necessary to keep trees healthy, like pruning, stump removal, and pest and disease management. It also constrains the number of new tree plantings each year despite a large potential for this activity, as demonstrated in our recent [tree canopy factsheets](#) for every Council and Community District. In addition to limited funding, the urban forest also suffers from inconsistent funding, and is vulnerable to drastic cuts, and these funding fluctuations interrupt cycles of regular tree maintenance and long-term planning that are essential to a long-lasting, healthy urban forest. The NYC Parks budget has been cut by \$25M for FY24 and the FY25 Preliminary Budget is nearly \$55M less than the adopted FY24 budget. The hiring freeze and reduced budget will result in nearly 1,000 fewer DPR workers, making it much more difficult for the agency to ensure parks are safe,

clean, green, and resilient across the city. We ask this Committee to help us restore these cuts and guarantee a fully funded urban forest.

Specifically, we ask for the following changes to the Preliminary FY25 Budget:

- **Dedicate 1% of the City Budget for Parks and commit to increased and baselined long-term funding for the urban forest** (including O&M for regular maintenance of NYC trees and capital investments for tree planting and restoration).
- **Workforce growth** by ending the hiring freeze and restoring staffing to pre-Covid levels.
 - Save and baseline the roles of the 50 Forestry and GreenThumb staff that will lose their positions at the end of June and add 50 Forestry and Gardener positions to restore staffing levels to pre-covid conditions.
 - Save and baseline the roles of the 50 Urban Park Rangers whose jobs will be eliminated at the end of June that provide environmental and cultural education to parks visitors.
 - Increase the number of Parks Enforcement Patrol (PEP) officer positions that help keep our urban forest and parks welcoming to visitors.
 - Save the roles of the 100 City Parks Workers (CPW's) that will lose their positions at the end of June and add 200 CPW positions to restore staffing levels to pre-Covid. CPW's help clean our parks, which enables more access to trees and green spaces.
- **Protection of forested natural areas** in NYC and reversal of the elimination of the Trails Formalization Program.
 - Follow through on the commitments in PlaNYC to increase access to quality green spaces for all New Yorkers and reinstate the Citywide Trails Program.
- Funding for a **rigorous planning and community engagement process for the City's first NYC Urban Forest Plan**, due July 31, 2025.
 - Ensure multiple agencies are empowered and resourced to participate in the planning process.
 - Provide funding for a robust participatory engagement process to ensure equity and environmental justice is centered in the planning effort.
- Commitment of **long-term funding for monitoring tree canopy** and measuring its growth or loss, specifically including the collection of light detection and ranging (Lidar) data every five years, as outlined in Local Law 148 of 2023.
- **Restoration of funding for tree stump removal** to ensure efficient replacement of felled trees with new plantings to contribute to the City's goal of at least 30% canopy cover.
- **Restoration of the tree risk management program** for inspections, pest management, and maintenance of our trees in streets and parks

Beyond DPR, we support funding for the urban under the jurisdiction of all NYC agencies that have trees in their care. In particular, New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) is another key leader in relation to the urban forest outside of DPR's jurisdiction, though they are under-resourced for this role. NYCHA campuses play an important role for the urban forest and its benefits for New Yorkers. NYCHA occupies about 1.15% of all land in NYC and is home to about 2.23% of the total tree canopy. Given this, we estimate that NYCHA is one of the largest holders of canopy in NYC outside of the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation, making NYCHA a meaningful urban forestry leader in NYC whose actions not only impact the urban forest both locally and citywide, but also help lead and set precedent for others. NYCHA's trees are meaningful not only for the approximately 339,000 NYCHA

residents who may access their myriad benefits, from connecting with nature locally to cooling, but also for the broader communities where they may represent some of the limited vegetation in our most heat vulnerable communities. Adequately investing in NYCHA's urban forest is a critical element of environmental justice in NYC, and in addition to increasing DPR's funding, we strongly encourage that NYCHA's municipal funding be restored and increased.

Furthermore, we hope that the City's first NYC Urban Forest Plan will demonstrate a unifying, thoughtful, ambitious, and lasting vision and roadmap to ensure the urban forest's longevity and ensure and expand its benefits for New Yorkers. We are grateful for the expertise of DPR and the leadership of Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice as the designated Lead Agency to develop the Plan. We are also grateful to this Committee for its commitment to a holistic approach for growing and managing the NYC urban forest. The Nature Conservancy stands ready to engage, provide technical expertise and thought partnership, and champion the City's development of the NYC Urban Forest Plan. We hope that sufficient funding will be provided to DPR and other managers, collaborators, and tree stewards in order to meet the Plan's deadline of July 31, 2025, as outlined in the law.

We commend this Committee, and City Council, for acknowledging our urban forest as an issue worthy of such significant consideration. I am encouraged by the Committee's leadership in ensuring we, as a city, ensure the future of our communities by due consideration of the urban forest as a critical part of the fabric of our neighborhoods, as well as a vital solution to climate change and issues of racial and environmental justice. I once again echo our ask that 1% of the City budget go to Parks and recommend full funding for the NYC urban forest.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. The Nature Conservancy is pleased to make ourselves available for discussion.

Thank you,



Tami Lin-Moges
Interim Director, NY Cities Program
The Nature Conservancy
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MAS Testimony on the FY25 Budget for the NYC Department of Parks & Recreation (NYC Parks)

March 21, 2024

The Municipal Art Society of New York (MAS) is a member of the Play Fair for Parks Coalition and the NYC Forest for All Coalition and supports our partners in their demands to allocate 1% of the City budget to the Department of Parks & Recreation (NYC Parks) and to fund our urban forest. For the past 130 years, MAS has advocated on behalf of the city's public realm, including an equitable and resilient system of parks and open spaces, and adequate funding to ensure these public assets thrive. The importance of our city's parks and urban green spaces cannot be overstated, as they are essential to our wellbeing and health, and are critical infrastructure in the fight to address climate change and support our long-term sustainability goals.

In addition to providing maintenance to 30,000 acres of public parkland, NYC Parks also operates community and recreation centers that are part of the city's lifeblood and administer crucial public programs to New Yorkers of all ages. Further, NYC Parks maintains the city's urban forest which helps improve public and environmental health by mitigating the heat island effect, lowering emissions, and supporting biodiversity. Thus, it is vital that NYC Parks is sufficiently funded to serve New Yorkers across all five boroughs, across all seasons, and for years to come.

The continued underfunding of NYC Parks has contributed to growing inequity across our communities. Parks are the backyards for millions of New Yorkers, but to be useable they need to be maintained. The City budget must allocate 1% to NYC Parks and retain pre-pandemic staffing levels to effectively uphold these vital public resources. Further, meeting Forest for All's demands for the City to fulfill its commitment to a 30% tree canopy coverage by 2035 necessitates investment now to return greater cost-savings in the future.

While Mayor Adams pledged 1% for NYC Parks in his initial campaign, the Adams Administration has reversed this assurance. NYC Parks faces devastating budget cuts with even less funding than in Fiscal Year 2024. These cuts will widen systemic inequities, diminish public health, eliminate parks programs, limit accessibility, and add to the already-present overburden on NYC Parks staff and resources.

MAS stands by Play Fair and Forest for All in calling on the Adams Administration to reevaluate these detrimental cuts and renew its commitment to NYC Parks; issuing the 1% funding commitment needed, increasing Parks staff headcount to pre-pandemic staffing levels, baselining 300 agency positions, and creating an urban forest plan to ensure our public spaces are clean, green, and resilient and so that NYC Parks can maintain our city's critical public realm for generations.

Yours truly,



Elizabeth Goldstein
President, Municipal Art Society of New York



PUBLIC TESTIMONY OF WATERFRONT ALLIANCE

March 21, 2024

New York City Committee on Parks and Recreation, Preliminary Budget Hearing RE: Equitable Investment in Parks and Open Spaces

Submitted by: Tyler Taba, Director of Resilience, Waterfront Alliance

My name is Tyler Taba, Director of Resilience at Waterfront Alliance the leader in waterfront revitalization, climate resilience, and advocacy for the New York-New Jersey Harbor region.

The Waterfront Alliance is committed to sustainability and to mitigating the effects of climate change across the region's hundreds of miles of waterfront. We've spearheaded the Rise to Resilience Coalition of 100+ groups advocating for policy related to climate resilience, we bring education focused on climate resilience to students in NYC DOE schools through our Estuary Explorers program, and we run the Waterfront Edge Design Guidelines (WEDG®) program for promoting innovation in climate design.

We are also proud advisory members of the Play Fair for Parks Coalition, which includes over 400 organizations from across the five boroughs, many of whom will testify today. We thank the City Council Committee on Parks Chair Krishnan for holding this hearing.

New Yorkers deserve a fully funded, safe, clean, green, and climate resilient park system. The budget cuts to NYC Parks this year and the proposed budget for next fiscal year jeopardize the very heart of our communities. These cuts will make it even more difficult for the already understaffed, under-resourced Parks Department to carry out the basic work needed to ensure parks are equitable and accessible for all New Yorkers.

Beyond parks, these cuts will hinder the agency's ability to manage its 15 miles of beaches, 51 recreation centers, 65 pools, 9,900 acres of natural areas, 2,300 athletic courts, 800 ballfields, and 1,000 playgrounds. They will inequitably impact the well-being and quality of life of countless individuals and families. Parks are an invaluable resource that foster physical and mental health, provide spaces for social interaction, and mitigate the climate crisis.

Top U.S. cities dedicate one to two percent of their budget to parks – New York City has been stuck at less than 0.6% for decades.



Aging infrastructure, hardened shoreline design, trash and dumping are just some of the physical barriers that persist in New York City's parks, along with lack of funding, particularly in lower-income communities of color. Waterfront parks figure centrally into New York City's open space and pose unique challenges and opportunities in terms of parks operations and maintenance.

In fact, roughly half of the land managed by the NYC Parks Department is directly on the water. The proximity to the shoreline makes these beautiful open spaces especially vulnerable to flooding, storm surges, and other consequences of extreme weather. At the same time, the recreational and educational opportunities - from boating to fishing to learning about marine life - are what makes our waterfront parks truly magical.

The waterfront facilities maintained by the Parks Department are nearing 80 years old, on average, which is an extremely long stretch for infrastructure that takes constant abuse from water and weather. When Hurricane Sandy battered the region, the storm swamped 5,700 acres of the city's parkland and spawned \$800 million in damages. Hurricane Ida had similar impacts. We need to bake more resilient features into park designs, upgrades, and retrofits.

We would also like to point to the challenges with public access to open spaces, especially along the water. In New York City's Comprehensive Waterfront Plan, there is a recommendation that calls to *"advance a citywide waterfront public access framework that addresses systemic access gaps and prioritizes investments in communities underserved by safe waterfront access."*

One of the ways in which this gap can be addressed is to leverage city-owned vacant and unused public land at the water's edge. These parcels can bring many physical, recreational, social, health, and economic benefits to a community when opened. The Comprehensive Waterfront Plan reinforces this notion and calls for *"identifying City-owned waterfront sites and facilities that can support additional public access through investment and coordination among City agencies."* There are up to 1,000 underutilized City properties along the waterfront.

Waterfront Alliance is working on a project identifying such public sites in socially vulnerable communities. Some are entirely unused and cut off from communities. Others are used occasionally by fisherman, paddlers, or pedestrians. These are mostly waterfront street ends where waterfront access is possible and where the community is already gathering, stewarding, and cleaning. These small parks and green spaces are equally as important as large parks and can serve as climate and public health solutions in urban communities.



We have done extensive research, community organizing, and advocacy around several priority sites where we are calling for a transfer of agency jurisdiction or an MOU with community partner in order to truly activate quality waterfront open space. The goal is to provide the strongest pathway possible for New York City to open its waterfront lands to the communities that need them the most.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and for your work to ensure New Yorkers are protected from the impacts of the climate crisis. Waterfront Alliance is willing and looking forward to partnering with the City Council to advance any, and all, of these recommendations and initiatives. I am happy to discuss these items in more detail with you at any point.



March 21, 2024

Founders

Vernice Miller-Travis
Peggy M. Shepard
Chuck Sutton

**Testimony of WE ACT for Environmental Justice
to the New York City Council Committee on Parks and Recreation
Management, on March 21, 2024 regarding Fiscal Year 25 Preliminary
Budget**

Board of Directors

Chair

Jeff Jones

Dear Committee Chair Shekar Krishnan, and Committees on Parks and Recreation:

Secretary

Nancy E. Anderson,
Ph.D.

WE ACT for Environmental Justice (WE ACT) is writing to testify on the need to invest in the City's future by funding environmental and climate policies and programs. We recognize and advocate for community-driven solutions that can remedy the institutionalized harms associated with unjust urban planning policies that have plagued communities of color for generations.

Treasurer

Ken P. Mak

The New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC Parks) has received inadequate funding over the last 40 years for maintenance and operations despite the critical role they play in the public life and resiliency efforts of New York City neighborhoods. While other major cities across the U.S. spend anywhere from 1.5 to 5 percent of their overall budget on parks, New York City spends just 0.6 percent, a woefully insufficient amount. NYC Parks is responsible for a 30,000 acre park system which includes our greenspaces, playgrounds, pools, beaches, waterfront, and athletic facilities. The department is also responsible for all trees planted in public spaces including our street trees, which account for 53 percent of the city's tree canopy. Trees, grass, and vegetation are all important environmental assets that help combat the urban heat island effect, which impacts dense cities like New York more, and Black and Latinx neighborhoods the most.

Members

Lakeisha M. Aquino
Peter Bokor
Dennis Derryck, Ph.D.
David Evans, Ph.D.
Abiola Fasehun, Esq.
Eric A Goldstein, Esq.
Neetin Gulati
Christy Loper
Sarangi Iyengar
Marielle Villar
Martiney
Crystal Romeo
Upperman
Vernice Miller-Travis
Phillip Morrow
Dart Westphal

Today, formerly redlined neighborhoods are an average of five degrees hotter in the summer than non-redlined areas due to less tree coverage and access to parks. WE ACT is a proud member of the Play Fair for Parks campaign, a coalition of 400-plus groups and organizations advocating for New York City's parks and open spaces.

Executive Director

Peggy M. Shepard

The Play Fair coalition is calling on the Mayor and the City Council to dedicate 1% of the City's budget to the NYC Parks Department so that New Yorkers can finally secure the equitable, 21st-century parks system they deserve. WE ACT in particular wants to see additional funding for NYC Parks dedicated to the expansion and maintenance of greenspace, tree canopy, and waterfront access in formerly redlined neighborhoods in Northern Manhattan and the South Bronx.



Due to historic disinvestment and structural racism, such as redlining, our parks, green spaces, and access to the City's waterfront are not equitably distributed. Access to green spaces is on average much lower in environmental justice neighborhoods that are already plagued by adverse health problems and high levels of pollution. NYC Parks does not have the resources it needs to provide access to quality green spaces and infrastructure in every neighborhood. Even though Mayor Adam's proposed austerity cuts fell short of what was originally expected, only full restoration of the Parks budget will allow for department staff to adequately care for New York's green spaces.

We strongly urge this Council to execute the City's commitment to its resilience and climate health goals by committing to funding the NYC Parks Department at 1% of the total FY25 budget.

Mayor Adams' cuts to NYC Parks is short sighted planning, and a disservice to New Yorkers who rely on parks not only to improve neighborhood resilience, but as spaces of play, joy, and a connection to nature. Further, we urge you to save the roles of the 100 City Parks Workers (CPW's) that will lose their positions at the end of June and add 200 CPW positions to restore staffing to pre-Covid levels. CPW's help clean our parks, which enables more access to trees and green spaces.

Public sector jobs have created pathways to the middle class for many Black families to build wealth and economic stability that never existed before – granting them equal access to decent pay, good health care, pension benefits, and job stability.¹ PEG cuts to vacancies and hiring freezes on the very jobs that deliver these benefits to an otherwise underserved community – which largely makes up the public workforce – is extremely detrimental.

When Mayor Eric Adams was running for the position he was elected to, he [publicly committed](#) to increasing the budget for the Department of Parks and Recreation to 1% of the total city operating budget, which would mean nearly \$1 billion annually. Since then he has continuously cut funding to the parks budget. Advocates want the mayor to fulfill this campaign promise – for some, it was the only reason they voted for him.

¹ Madowitz, Michael, Anne Price, and C. Weller. "Public work provides economic security for black families and communities." Center for American Progress (2020). <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/public-work-provides-economic-security-black-families-communities/>



We need the City Council to hold Mayor Adams accountable and push back on these shortsighted budget cuts. You cannot accept an adopted budget that does not include 1% funding for NYC Parks.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Lonnie J. Portis
NYC Policy & Advocacy Manager
lonnie@weact.org
646-866-8720



March 21, 2024

Founders

Vernice Miller-Travis
Peggy M. Shepard
Chuck Sutton

**Testimony of WE ACT for Environmental Justice
to the New York City Council Committee on Parks and Recreation
Management, on March 21, 2024 regarding Fiscal Year 25 Preliminary
Budget for the Urban Forest.**

Board of Directors

Chair

Jeff Jones

Dear Committee Chair Shekar Krishnan, and Committees on Parks and Recreation:

Secretary

Nancy E. Anderson,
Ph.D.

WE ACT for Environmental Justice (WE ACT) is writing to testify on the need to invest in the City's future by funding environmental and climate policies and programs. Founded in 1988, WE ACT is a community-based organization in Harlem, New York City. At the city, state and federal levels WE ACT has been fighting environmental racism – racial discrimination in environmental policy-making, enforcement of regulations and laws, and targeting communities of color for toxic waste disposal and siting of polluting industries. We recognize and advocate for community-driven solutions that can remedy the institutionalized harms associated with unjust urban planning policies that have plagued communities of color for generations. Likewise, WE ACT stands firmly amongst nearly 140 organizations in our commitment to justly and equitably protecting, maintaining, expanding New York City's urban forest, and promoting the NYC Urban Forest Plan as a member of [Forest for All NYC](#).

Treasurer

Ken P. Mak

Members

Lakeisha M. Aquino
Peter Bokor
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David Evans, Ph.D.
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Eric A Goldstein, Esq.
Neetin Gulati
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Sarangi Iyengar
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Due to historic disinvestment and structural racism, such as redlining, our parks, green spaces, and access to the City's waterfront are not equitably distributed. Access to green spaces is on average much lower in environmental justice neighborhoods that are already plagued by adverse health problems and high levels of pollution. NYC Parks does not have the resources it needs to provide access to quality green spaces and infrastructure in every neighborhood. Even though Mayor Adam's proposed austerity cuts fell short of what was originally expected, only full restoration of the Parks budget will allow for department staff to adequately care for New York's green spaces.

Executive Director

Peggy M. Shepard

We strongly urge this Council to execute the City's commitment to its resilience and climate health goals by fully funding NYC's through the following actions:

- 1. Fund the NYC Parks Department at 1% of the total FY25 budget.** We are [lagging behind](#) other major cities in our budget allocation to parks, despite having far more acreage to maintain. San Francisco spends 1.6 percent of its municipal budget on parks, Los Angeles spends 2.9 percent, Chicago 4.3 percent and Minneapolis 5.3 percent. This is short sighted planning, and a disservice to New Yorkers who rely on parks not only to improve neighborhood resilience, but as spaces of play, joy, and a



connection to nature. Further, we urge you to save the roles of the 100 City Parks Workers (CPW's) that will lose their positions at the end of June and add 200 CPW positions to restore staffing to pre-Covid levels. CPW's help clean our parks, which enables more access to trees and green spaces.

2. **Commit to full funding for the NYC urban forest - including to NYC Parks, NYC Housing Authority, public schools, and many other city agencies with trees in their care.** The preliminary FY25 NYC Parks budget includes:

- Elimination of the tree risk management program and trail formalization program and the civilian positions that supported them
- Reduction in stump removal, which slows the replacement of felled trees with new plantings - hampering the City's goal to reach at least 30% canopy cover
- Elimination of NYC SPARX – a program that teaches STEM to young girls and fosters the next generation of workers with the passion and skills needed to sustain our urban forest

Restore these programs and positions in the FY25 budget!

3. **Follow through on the commitments in PlaNYC** to increase access to quality green spaces for all New Yorkers by achieving 30% canopy cover and reinstate the Citywide Trails Program. Expedient investment toward these goals is essential, as mature trees provide a majority of heat mitigation, air pollution reduction, and stormwater retention benefits when compared to saplings. Saving this task for some other administration down the line increases the likelihood investments in the urban forest will not reach their full potential by the time we need them most.
4. **Commit funding for a robust multi-agency planning process to create the citywide NYC Urban Forest Plan** mandated by Local Law 148 of 2023 to be completed by July 31, 2025, including sufficient funding for a rigorous community engagement effort.
5. **Expand and fund green infrastructure¹ throughout the City and ensure the agencies like NYC Parks and DEP have funding for maintenance.** Green infrastructure projects, such as rain gardens, bioswales, water squares, green and blue roofs, daylighting rivers, and permeable pavements help absorb stormwater, purify the air, and mitigate the urban heat island effect. This would maximize environmental benefits to all communities, especially in underserved communities and areas that have underutilized spaces. When WE ACT has met with NYC Parks to

¹ Green infrastructure involves capturing rain water through natural systems before it enters and overwhelms the combined sewer system.



discuss green infrastructure and street trees in East Harlem, a historically underserved community, their main concern for not expanding desperately needed green infrastructure was maintenance costs. This cannot continue to be a hindrance for the agencies responsible with adapting our built environment for climate change.²

Swift and prudent investment is pivotal to protect the most climate vulnerable New Yorkers against extreme heat. This past summer was the [hottest on record](#), and there is a 99% chance this year will rank amongst the [top 5 hottest years](#). New York is acutely vulnerable to extreme heat events. A recent [study](#) found that New York City has the worst urban heat island effect in the country - temperatures can measure up to nine degrees Fahrenheit hotter than surrounding rural areas for nearly 80% of the population. This is due in large part to 72% of New York City's built environment consisting of concrete or asphalt, materials that absorb heat and amplifies the urban heat island effect.. While all of New York City experiences the urban heat island effect caused by the density of impermeable surfaces that absorb heat, environmental justice neighborhoods like East Harlem are subject to a hyper-local urban heat island effect, exposing these residents to [temperatures as much as 10 degrees hotter than the City average](#). And while NYC's natural areas are 4-6 degrees Fahrenheit cooler than the average temperature of other land surface types during extreme heat events, low-income communities have [21% less park space](#) than higher-income neighborhoods. Failure to correct these inequities built into our urban environment results in Black residents dying at twice the rate of their white counterparts from heat stroke and heat-exacerbated illnesses.

These actions also improve the City's ability to manage stormwater from increasing frequent and strong storms. There are many neighborhoods that are vulnerable to flooding from extreme rain, sea level rise, and storm surge. East Harlem residents have been consistently vocal about flooded streets during strong rain. Large areas of the neighborhood sit directly in the 100-year flood plain, according to [flood maps](#) from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, however East Harlem's waterfront - its first line of defense to future coastal storms - remains dilapidated and inaccessible. The extreme rainfall and subsequent flooding the city experienced on Friday, September 29th underscores the need for more significant investments in parks, openspace, and proven green infrastructure solutions such as bioswales, street trees and blue belts. Likewise, NYC's forested natural areas [soak up as much stormwater as \\$580M worth of new green infrastructure](#). The proposed cuts to NYC Park's operating budget will prevent these life saving investments from taking shape and cost us more money long-term remedying more severe flood damages.

² East Harlem is a formerly redlined community that has suffered from years of neglect, disinvestment, and short-sighted planning from the public and private sectors. This has allowed severe racial, economic, and environmental disparities to proliferate. East Harlem has no tree canopy, and a 6 block stretch surrounding 125th street received no new tree plantings this year, and no anticipated tree plantings next year. When we inquired about this with the Parks Department about this stark oversight, they told us that East Harlem is a hostile environment for baby trees which lowers their success rate of plantings without extra maintenance, which they do not have funding for. When WE ACT inquired about a potential green infrastructure project leveraging Bond Act funding for the 125th street corridor to help cool the environment in the absence of tree canopy, their first response was a concern over maintenance, and a lack of funding.



The most at-risk areas have residents that are majority Black and Latinx and represent some of the poorest in New York City. This is just one of the ways communities of color tangibly feel the legacy of racist policies like redlining. Such policies that have discouraged investment in communities of color have resulted in a lack of tree coverage, disparities in generational wealth, and poor building maintenance; all of which render both the inhabitants and the built environment ill-equipped to withstand extreme weather events that will only become more severe and frequent as climate change persists.

Despite the critical functions the urban forest serves to our communities and acknowledgments of its importance by the administration, we continue to see contradictory funding decisions. Mayor Adams' pledge to increase NYC Parks funding to 1% of the City's total budget, PlaNYC's commitment to a 30% canopy cover, and the unanimous Council passage of historic legislation creating the City's first urban forest plan and requiring the City to consider the role of trees and tree canopy in its long-term sustainability planning were major touchstones of progress last year. However, the proposed FY25 budget would cut \$55 million dollars from NYC Parks (in comparison to the FY24 budget) and hundreds of essential jobs, which threaten a greener, healthier, and more resilient New York City. Such funding actions diminish our adaptation capacity, hamper green economy growth, and erode public trust in city leadership to prioritize community wellbeing. Every dollar invested in risk reduction and prevention [can save up to \\$15 in post-disaster recovery](#). Make the humane, climate informed, and fiscally responsible choice.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Caleb Smith
Resilience Coordinator
646.983.7288
caleb.smith@weact.org
WE ACT for Environmental Justice



New York City Council Committee on Parks
Thursday, March 21, 2024
Committee on Parks and Recreation - Preliminary Budget Hearing
America SCORES New York

Good afternoon, my name is Dr. Danielle Madden-Buck, and I represent America SCORES New York. ASNY is a member of the Play Fair for Parks Coalition, which includes over 400 organizations from across the five boroughs, many of whom will testify today. We thank the City Council Committee on Parks Chair Shekar Krishnan for holding this hearing.

New Yorkers deserve a fully funded, safe, clean, green and resilient parks system. The budget cuts to NYC Parks this year and the proposed budget for next fiscal year jeopardize the very heart of our communities. These cuts will make it even more difficult for the already understaffed, under-resourced Parks Department to carry out the basic work needed to ensure parks are equitable and accessible for all New Yorkers.

Beyond parks, these cuts will hinder the agency's ability to manage its 15 miles of beaches, 51 recreation centers, 65 pools, 9,900 acres of natural areas, 2,300 athletic courts, 800 ballfields, and 1,000 playgrounds. They will inequitably impact the well-being and quality of life of countless individuals and families. Parks are an invaluable resource that foster physical and mental health, provide spaces for social interaction, and mitigate the climate crisis.

One of our long-term participants, **Mia Baez**, has written about her positive experience with NYC Parks. She has been a student at **PS 98 (Inwood)** and **Mott Hall Middle School (Harlem)** and is now a 10th grade student at **Worldview High School**. This is why she is passionate about increasing parks funding and staffing:

The increase of park fundings would benefit our communities, limit the consequences of climate change, and enhance and improve the experience for tourists. Being involved in America SCORES meant playing in different parks and experience different parts of nature. To be able to touch the soft grass and wet soil from the ground helped me grow into the sport the I love the most. After seeing what the park was, I never wanted to leave.

Every game or practice, I look at the smooth collusion of skyburst reds and yellows into the calm of night, never wanting the green of the trees and the calmness of the lakes to leave. These parks make a big impact on people's lives, being able to create a green, peaceful and beautiful place for people to go out and have fun and even enjoy themselves and play soccer like I do.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dr. Buck". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent loop at the end.

Dr. Danielle Madden-Buck
Executive Director
America SCORES New York



Brunswick, VT New York City Council Committee on Parks & Recreation
 Thursday, March 21, 2024
 Greenville, ME Preliminary Budget Hearing
 Northampton, MA Mark Zakutansky, Director of Conservation Policy Engagement, Appalachian Mountain Club
 Alexandria, MI
 Cotton Woods, NH Good afternoon, Chair Krishnan, and Members of the Committee. I'm Mark Zakutansky, Director
 of Conservation Policy Engagement at the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC). Thank you for the
 Cornish, NH opportunity to testify regarding AMC's programs in NYC and in support of the city's investment in
 parks.
 Basking Ridge, NJ
 West Nyack, NY The Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) is the nation's oldest conservation and recreation
 New York, NY organization with a mission to foster the protection, enjoyment and understanding of the
 outdoors. Across New York State, our organization has over 10,000 active members, with more
 than 6,000 of those members located in New York City.

Our members love New York City's parks, trails, and outdoor spaces. We host hundreds of outdoor trips every year in the region, many in New York City, free of charge and open to the public, such as nature walks in Central Park and trail maintenance and stewardship workdays in Pelham Bay Park. AMC also welcomes New Yorkers to our full-service camp in Harriman State Park, the Corman Harriman Outdoor Center, accessible by transit, in addition to our outdoor lodge on Fire Island, seasonally welcoming New Yorkers to Long Island Sound to enjoy swimming, boating and outdoor programs.

One of our keystone initiatives in New York City, the Educators Outdoors program, is focused on expanding opportunities for meaningful outdoor experiences for New Yorkers by training youth leaders in lower-income communities and communities of color with outdoor leadership skills to allow them to feel comfortable taking their young people into the outdoors. Educators who complete one of these training courses are eligible for free outdoor gear loans from AMC's gear libraries including one located at Floyd Bennett Field; on-going support from AMC staff, who are available to review trip itineraries and answer questions; and need-based subsidized rates at AMC huts, lodges, and camps. Since we began this program more than 50 years ago, AMC has trained more than 5,000 youth leaders, who have provided outdoor experiences to more than 150,000 young people.

AMC works in partnership with the National Park Service to provide dedicated space for our programming and storage needs at Ecology Village, located within Floyd Bennett Field, as part of Gateway National Recreation Area to advance our Educators Outdoors program. In 2022 for example, AMC's Educators Outdoors program led four major training courses at Floyd Bennett Field, including: Camping Outdoor Leadership Training; Biking with Youth; Gear Logistics Training; and a Gear Repair & Maintenance workshop. At Ecology Village, AMC maintains a gear library of outdoor equipment that is available for free for our partners to borrow and use. 22% of our partners borrow our tents, sleeping bags, and outdoor equipment to use them at Ecology Village, providing outdoor camping experiences for young people right in New York City, with 76 youth participating with AMC partners for outdoor experiences at Floyd Bennett Field, some more than



once for a total of 166 trip days at Ecology Village alone. AMC has a dedicated campsite for these groups separate from the public campground at Floyd Bennett Field.

AMC is proud to partner with the New York City Parks Department in maintaining and managing some sections of hiking and walking trails; however, more investments are needed in New York City's parks and recreational infrastructure both for the services that we provide and for the public. AMC members, as well as our Educators Outdoors partners, utilize New York City parks for outdoor trips due to the proximity and ease of using transit to access and attend these programs.

AMC recommends that the FY25 Preliminary Budget for the Committee on Parks and Recreation seek to restore agency staffing to pre-COVID levels; restore \$2.4 million in permanent, baselined funding for a citywide Nature Trail Formalization program; Restore \$2.5M in permanent, baselined funding for 45 forestry management staff whose jobs are set to expire in June; and, to save and make permanent 50 Urban Park Ranger positions set to expire in June. Additional opportunities to connect community organizations to AMC's Educators Outdoors program and to support AMC and those partners financially should also be considered.

We appreciate the Committee's willingness to accept and consider our testimony on these important matters, and we look forward to continuing to offer meaningful and high-quality outdoor events and experiences in New York City.

If you have any questions about the Appalachian Mountain Club and our testimony, you can direct them to Mark Zakutansky, Director of Conservation Policy Engagement, at mzakutansky@outdoors.org or at 551-427-0974.

Please ensure that the NYC urban forest is fully funded in the FY25 budget. The urban forest is critical public infrastructure and requires sufficient resources to equitably serve New Yorkers.

My organization, Big Reuse, is a member of [Forest for All NYC](#), a coalition of nearly 140 organizations committed to justly and equitably protecting, maintaining, expanding, and promoting the NYC urban forest. The urban forest is essential to the quality of life of all New Yorkers and NYC Parks plays an invaluable role in caring for a significant amount of our city's trees and green spaces. The urban forest matters to my organization/community because we have operated a highly successful community composting program that was defunded by this year's city budget. Currently we are being evicted from our Queensbridge site.

Forest for All NYC celebrated the City's previous commitments to the urban forest, including Mayor Adams' pledge to increase NYC Parks funding to 1% of the City's total budget, PlaNYC's commitment to a 30% canopy cover, and the unanimous Council passage of historic legislation creating the City's first urban forest plan and requiring the City to consider the role of trees and tree canopy in its long-term sustainability planning. However, the cuts in the FY24 budget and proposed cuts in the FY25 budget are not in line with these commitments.

While our coalition expected to witness a shift towards increased and more proportionate investment in the NYC urban forest, the administration has instead proposed disinvesting further. The proposed FY25 budget would cut \$55 million dollars from NYC Parks (in comparison to the FY24 budget) and hundreds of essential jobs, which threaten a greener, healthier, and more resilient New York City.

Now is the moment to increase investments in our urban forest, not cut them, in order to put NYC on the path to reach at least 30% tree canopy cover by 2035, equitably. Failing to adequately care for the urban forest could cost New Yorkers more in the long run; caring for the trees we have and planting more now means cost-savings in the long run.

Full funding for the NYC urban forest is critical for the health of all New Yorkers and the city's resilience to climate change.

Please commit to full funding for the NYC urban forest including to NYC Parks, NYC Housing Authority, public schools, and many other city agencies with trees in their care. The preliminary FY25 NYC Parks budget includes:

- Elimination of the tree risk management program and trail formalization program and the civilian positions that supported them
- Reduction in stump removal, which slows the replacement of felled trees with new plantings - hampering the City's goal to reach at least 30% canopy cover
 - Elimination of NYC SPARX – a program that teaches STEM to young girls and fosters the next generation of workers with the passion and skills needed to sustain our urban forest
 - Restore these programs and positions in the FY25 budget!
- Follow through on the commitments in PlaNYC to increase access to quality green spaces for all New Yorkers and reinstate the Citywide Trails Program

- Commit funding for a robust multi-agency planning process to create the citywide NYC Urban Forest Plan mandated by Local Law 148 of 2023 to be completed by July 31, 2025, including sufficient funding for a rigorous community engagement effort.
- End the hiring freeze and restore NYC Parks staffing to pre-Covid levels to ensure our parks and the urban forest are safe, clean, and accessible to all New Yorkers (NYC Parks still has nearly 1000 fewer staff than they had before Covid budget cuts)
 - Save and baseline the roles of the 50 Forestry and GreenThumb staff that will lose their positions at the end of June and add 50 Forestry and Gardener positions to restore staffing levels to pre-covid conditions
 - Save and baseline the roles of the 50 Urban Park Rangers whose jobs will be eliminated at the end of June that provide environmental and cultural education to parks visitors
 - Increase the number of Parks Enforcement Patrol (PEP) officer positions that help keep our urban forest and parks welcoming to visitors
- Save the roles of the 100 City Parks Workers (CPW's) that will lose their positions at the end of June and add 200 CPW positions to restore staffing levels to pre-Covid. CPW's help clean our parks, which enables more access to trees and green spaces.



New York City Council Committee on Parks - Preliminary Budget Hearing

Thursday, March 21, 2024

Testimony By: Nilka Martell, Bronx River Alliance, Chair

My name is Nilka Martell and I am the Chair of the Bronx River Alliance. I am also a life-long Bronxite, the founder and director of Loving the Bronx, and an enthusiastic champion of all Bronx parks. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony about the proposed FY25 budget and the importance of restoring full funding to our vital parks.

The Bronx River Alliance is a nonprofit formed by community activists and government partners in 2001 to protect, improve and restore the Bronx River corridor and greenway so that they can be healthy resources for the communities through which they flow. We work in close partnership with NYC Parks and dozens of community-based organizations. We are also a member of the Play Fair for Parks Coalition, which includes over 400 organizations from across the five boroughs. We are achieving what many thought was impossible - the creation of beautiful waterfront parks, the restoration of forests and salt marshes, even the return of a beaver (and dolphins) to the Bronx River! Perhaps most importantly, we have transformed what was once an abandoned dumping ground into a cherished community asset.



In 2020, our parks demonstrated how essential they are. They were one of the few places that remained open during the darkest days of the pandemic. And yet, NYC Parks sustained a devastating budget cut. We all saw the impact of inadequate funding for our parks - they were full of garbage; dumping and graffiti increased; enforcement and security couldn't keep up. Parks were in their worst condition in two decades. Our parks suffered. New York City residents suffered, layering challenges on an inexpressibly difficult year.

Now in 2024, NYC Parks has fewer workers than it did before the pandemic despite increased demand and clear need for these spaces, and thousands fewer workers than it had decades ago. The budget cuts to NYC Parks this year and the proposed budget for next fiscal year jeopardize the very heart of our communities and threaten the progress that has been made along the Bronx River. The nearly \$55M in proposed cuts will make it even more difficult for the already understaffed, under-resourced Parks Department to carry out the basic work needed to ensure parks are equitable and accessible for all New Yorkers.

Today, the Bronx River Alliance stands with all those calling for the City to “Play Fair” and fully reinstate funds that were cut from the Parks budget. Specifically, we ask you to:

- Allocate 1% of the city budget for NYC Parks
- Prioritize funding for parks, as they are critical infrastructure
- Provide New Yorkers a parks system that is safe, clean, green, and resilient
- Hold Mayor Adams accountable for committing to allocating 1% of the city budget for NYC Parks

NYC Parks are at a tipping point, with a proposed FY25 budget that will result in nearly 1,000 fewer parks workers. Parks need more PEP Officers, City Parks Workers, Gardeners, and Cleaning Corps workers - not less. New Yorkers and our beloved parks deserve better than trash strewn playgrounds, delayed activation of sprinklers amidst unprecedented summer heat, long term bathroom closures, and neglected tree canopy care in the midst of a climate crisis. Parks are critical to our public health and safety, and are drivers of social equity; they should be funded as such.

Thank you again for your leadership and for the opportunity to express the Bronx River Alliance’s support for increased investment in NYC Parks.

Sincerely,



Nilka Martell
Chair

CC: Bronx River Alliance Board Members
Carolyn McLaughlin, Vice Chair
Ethan Strell, Secretary
Jonathan Rook, Treasurer
Raji Kalra
Joan Byron
Maarten de Kadt
Marit Larson
David Shuffler
Nicole Perrino
Justin Mashia
Vivian Vazquez Izirarry
Elizabeth Figueroa

Testimony Provided by
[Noelani Kidder, GreenThumb Leadership Academy and Mentorship Program]
For the Committee on Parks and Recreation Budget Hearing
on the FY25 NYC Budget
March 21, 2024

Thank you to Chairman Krishnan and members of the Committee on Parks and Recreation for the opportunity to submit this testimony. My name is Noelani Kidder, and I am a member of **Brooklyn Bears Carlton Avenue Community Garden** located in **Brooklyn**. Our garden, **Brooklyn Bears Carlton Avenue Community Garden**, has a rich history of community involvement and has been a vital green space in our neighborhood.

As a member of the Green Guerillas [Council of Gardeners](#), a dynamic coalition uniting community gardeners across New York City, I want to highlight several crucial recommendations for advancing a sustainable and equitable food system in our city.

Recent 10% NYC budget cuts, particularly to the Department of Parks and Recreation, have severely affected NYC GreenThumb. This essential agency has seen a significant reduction in its budget, hindering its capacity to provide technical assistance, necessary supplies, and adequate staffing, thus impeding its ability to effectively support community gardeners. Therefore, we call upon the city to invest in:

Increasing funding to the Parks Equity Initiative (PEI) and allocating \$300,000 of PEI funds to create a pilot program empowering garden groups to access funds directly, through a simplified application and reporting process, fostering equity and sustainability. Continuing to invest in A Greener NYC to empower local organizations in providing youth with green jobs, infrastructure, and advocacy opportunities to community gardeners. Increase funding to the Get Stuff Clean initiative to enable the DOHMH Rat Academy to address rodent infestation and illegal dumping affecting community gardens, while also strengthening collaboration between DSNY and GreenThumb, and enhancing the relationship and outreach of the Department of Health & Mental Hygiene Rat Academy Training program with community gardeners for effective access to this citywide resource. Restore \$2.6 million in funding for GreenThumb.

We support the [Play Fair Coalition](#) in asking for the Mayor to dedicate 1% of the NYC Fiscal Budget to the Department of Parks and Recreation.

Community gardeners have been left to fend for themselves for decades. It is time for the city to invest in its communities and uplift the benefits community gardens contribute to neighborhood success. The budgetary constraints facing NYC Parks's GreenThumb division underscore the urgent need for our platform to focus on protecting and enhancing vital services and initiatives integral to the well-being of our city and its residents.

Noelani Kidder
Brooklyn Bears Carlton Avenue Community Garden

Testimony of John Surico

Senior Fellow for Climate and Opportunity, Center for an Urban Future

Before the New York City Council

Committee on Parks and Recreation

March 21st, 2024

Good afternoon. I'm John Surico, the Senior Fellow for Climate and Opportunity at the Center for an Urban Future, an independent think tank focused on creating a stronger and more inclusive economy in New York. Thank you to Chair Krishnan and members of the committee for the opportunity to testify today.

New York's parks, playgrounds, and open spaces have experienced record usage in recent years, becoming even more vital to the health of New Yorkers and more critical to the city's economic future. But today, our 30,000 acres of parks and natural areas face hundreds of millions of dollars in unmet needs, and for years, if not decades, New York City has struggled to provide sufficient funding to pay for them.

We strongly support the City Council's efforts to work with the administration to reverse the nearly \$54 million in cuts proposed for FY 2025. But without deeper changes, it's unlikely there will ever be enough dollars allocated through the budget process to meet New York's ever-growing parks and open space needs.

That's why city leaders need to get creative and seek out new sustainable sources of recurring funding for parks. Our [newest report](#) at CUF outlines 20 specific and achievable ideas to do exactly that.

A new \$1 surcharge on tickets sold at stadiums located on parkland, like Citi Field and Arthur Ashe Stadium, could help offset a significant share of the parks systems' unmet maintenance needs. At Citi Field alone, this surcharge would generate more than \$2.5 million for parks—enough to hire more than 50 full-time gardeners.

A modest expansion of restaurants, cafes, and other concessions in parks—like year-round spas in existing pool houses—could generate new funding for parks while enhancing the experience of parkgoers.

City officials could also consider enacting fees on gas-powered landscaping and stormwater management and soliciting a voluntary contribution from hotel guests.

For-profit events held in parks, from soccer camps to music festivals, should be asked to contribute more to parks' bottom line. And by investing in the infrastructure needed to monetize organic waste from parks, including turning fallen trees into commercial lumber, the city can convert this multimillion-dollar annual expense into a steady stream of revenue.

Similarly, the city should enable more New Yorkers to directly support their green spaces. For example, a membership program with corporate tiers, ticketed special events, and well-designed merchandise could tap New Yorkers' pride—and generosity—to benefit parks. And New York City needs to make it much easier for nonprofit organizations and community groups to step in and support their local parks—a process often bogged down in bureaucracy.

In addition to generating new revenues for parks, policymakers should also establish mechanisms to ensure that the new resources benefit parks in every corner of the city—not just those that can support new revenue-generating opportunities. One idea is to create an 80-20 split for all future revenue from new parks concessions, with 80

percent remaining with the park hosting the new concession and 20 percent allocated to a fund to support parks with the greatest needs, particularly those in lower-income communities.

The Center commends the City Council for consistently championing parks and open space, and advocating for funding to address the full scope of New York City's public parks' needs. Thanks, also, to Chair Krishnan for his thoughtful consideration of the ideas in our recent report.

By getting creative about generating dedicated new revenues for parks, city leaders can deliver the healthy, vibrant parks and open spaces that New Yorkers need now, and for decades to come.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



Contact: Clare Miflin
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917 254 7453

Testimony for March 21st 2024 Preliminary Parks Budget Hearing

I am Clare Miflin, ED of the Center for Zero Waste Design and a member of the Save our Compost Coalition. I participated in the panel [What Happens to NYC's Organic Waste?](#), and the [Community Compost Teach-Ins](#). I have looked at how composting in Parks could take part citywide as part of our Put Waste to Work campaign, see [post](#).

I am also a supporter of [Forest for All NYC](#), a coalition of nearly 140 organizations committed to justly and equitably protecting, maintaining, expanding, and promoting the NYC urban forest. The urban forest is essential to the quality of life of all New Yorkers and NYC Parks plays an invaluable role in caring for a significant amount of our city's trees and green spaces.

Parks and NYC Urban Forest are essential for all New Yorkers for urban cooling, stormwater mitigation and active and passive recreation. They can be even more effective for stormwater management and urban cooling with the application of compost and community stewardship. Community composting also gives opportunities for active recreation and educates New Yorkers, and can also engage volunteers in street tree and parks stewardship. So I am strongly in support of composting of Parks yard waste, something that has been required of the Department of Sanitation by the city administrative code since 1989, and can be seen in section 16-308 sections b and c. I believe this is best done with the cooperation of community composters, and done on underutilized Parks land, like that used by Big Reuse under the [Queensborough Bridge](#) and would urge Parks to continue their license.

Forest for All NYC celebrated the City's previous commitments to the urban forest, including Mayor Adams' pledge to increase NYC Parks funding to 1% of the City's total budget, PlaNYC's commitment to a 30% canopy cover, and the unanimous Council passage of historic legislation creating the City's first urban forest plan and requiring the City to consider the role of trees and tree canopy in its long-term sustainability planning. However, the cuts in the FY24 budget and proposed cuts in the FY25 budget budget would cut \$55 million dollars from NYC Parks (in comparison to the FY24 budget) and hundreds of essential jobs, which threaten a greener, healthier, and more resilient New York City.

Now is the moment to increase investments in our urban forest, not cut them, in order to put NYC on the path to reach at least 30% tree canopy cover by 2035, equitably. Failing to adequately care for the urban forest could cost New Yorkers more in the long run; caring for the trees we have and planting more now means cost-savings in the long run. Full funding for the NYC urban forest and for community composting is critical for the health of all New Yorkers and the city's resilience to climate change. For more information please see my opinion article written with Samantha MacBride, for more: [Don't Kill Community Composting in NYC](#)

I am very happy to discuss or expand on any of these ideas further,
Respectfully,

Clare Miflin,
Executive Director, Center for Zero Waste Design



**Testimony of Jenny Veloz, Policy and Advocacy Associate
Citizens' Committee for Children of New York**

**Submitted to New York City Council Committee on Parks and Recreation Preliminary Budget
Hearing
March 21, 2024**

Since 1944, Citizens' Committee for Children of New York has served as an independent, multi-issue child advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring every New York child is healthy, housed, educated, and safe. CCC does not accept or receive public resources, provide direct services, or represent a sector or workforce; our priority is improving outcomes for children and families through civic engagement, research, and advocacy. We document the facts, engage, and mobilize New Yorkers, and advocate for solutions to ensure the wellbeing of New York's children, families, and communities.

We would like to thank Chair Krishnan and all the members of the Committee on Parks and Recreation for holding today's hearing on the NYC Parks budget for Fiscal Year 2025.

The pandemic elevated the importance of city parks, particularly as families sought safe and public opportunities to engage children.¹ Parks provide a vital service for families and children, helping promote play, exercise, and positive mental health. Children explore and learn in playgrounds and natural areas. In a city where few residents have access to a backyard, parks are an invaluable resource that foster physical and mental health, provide spaces for social interaction, and mitigate climate crisis.

The budget cuts to NYC Parks this year and the proposed budget for next fiscal year jeopardize the very heart of our communities. The NYC Parks budget has been cut by 5%, or \$25 million, for this fiscal year. The FY25 Preliminary Budget is nearly \$55 million less than this fiscal year's budget. Years of underfunding have presented challenges for NYC Parks employees in keeping parks clean, safe and accessible. The hiring freeze and reduced budget will result in nearly 1,000 fewer parks works, making it impossible for the agency to ensure parks are safe, clean, green, and resilient across the city. NYC Parks has fewer workers than it did before the pandemic despite increased demand and clear need for these spaces.

These cuts will make it even more difficult for the already understaffed, under-resourced Parks Department to carry out the basic work needed to ensure parks are equitable and accessible for all New Yorkers.

Parks are critical infrastructure for public health and safety and are drivers of social equity, and they should be funded as such. **CCC joins the Play Fair Coalition in calling for the restoration of positions lost to hiring freeze and attrition, saving 100 City Parks Workers who will lose their jobs in July, and adding 100 Parks Enforcement Parol Officers to keep parks safe.**

If the reduction to the NYC Parks budget is included in the Executive Budget, New Yorkers can expect trash strewn parks and playgrounds, delayed activation of sprinklers and water fountains during the summer, reduced hours and public programming at recreation centers, long-term bathroom closures, and neglected tree canopy care. While New York City's budget has grown by 127% since 1980 and other frontline city agency's budget has grown between 127%-165%, NYC Parks budget has only grown by 72%. NYC Parks budget has not kept up pace with other city agencies and neighborhood

parks and green spaces are feeling the impact. **CCC joins the Play Fair Coalition in calling on the City to fulfill the Mayor’s commitment to increase the New York City Parks budget by 1%**

CCC is also calling on the Mayor to restore \$5.1 million for the Council’s Parks Equity Initiative for the continued support for community programming in smaller neighborhood parks, as well as the work of park and garden volunteer groups.

Parks are critical infrastructure for public health and safety and are drivers of social equity. New York City has a responsibility to make sure that our parks are safe, clean and equitable for all New Yorkers. New Yorkers deserve a fully funded, safe, clean, green and resilient parks system.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

ⁱ New Yorkers for Parks. “1% for Parks Impact Report.” March 2023. <https://www.ny4p.org/client-uploads/pdf/NY4P-1-Percent-for-Parks-Impact-Report.pdf>



**Testimony Submitted by
Iyeshima Harris-Ouedraogo, Policy Manager, Equity Advocates
For the Committee on Parks & Recreation Hearing
on the FY25 NYC Budget**

March 21, 2024

My name is **Iyeshima Harris-Ouedraogo, Policy Manager, Equity Advocates**. Thank you to Council Member Krishnan for holding today's budget hearing and the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Equity Advocates builds the capacity of nonprofit organizations to address the underlying causes of food inequity through policy and systems change. We partner with New York-based organizations working to alleviate hunger and poverty, providing them with the tools they need to be more civically engaged—including policy education, advocacy training and coalition leadership, such as convening the NY Food Policy Alliance since March 2020.

[NYC Food Policy Alliance](#) is a multi-sector group of 75+ food system stakeholders from across New York, including frontline CBOs directly impacted by food insecurity. The Alliance's mission is to identify and advocate for public policies and funding that not only respond to our current economic and hunger crises, but also address the ongoing vulnerabilities and injustices of the food system. Collectively, we approach this work through an anti-racism lens to ensure communities of color and other systemically under-resourced communities benefit from public policies and funding.

It is crucial to acknowledge the challenging fiscal landscape shaped by Mayor Eric Adams' proposed 15% budget cuts across New York City's agencies and those proposed in the FY25 Preliminary Budget. The proposed \$60 million cut to the Department of Education's Office of Food and Nutrition Services (OFNS) threatens the progress made over the years to ensure healthier, more nutritious school meals. The \$3 million budget reduction for the NYC Compost initiative has led to over 100 layoffs, effectively dismantling the city's local composting programs for residents¹. Rather than cutting critical community programs, the City should invest in and enhance essential services that are integral to the health and welfare of the city and its residents—including the thousands of new arrivals who are in need of services and support.

Our platform, advocating for enhanced economic development and support for marginalized communities, becomes more crucial in this context. As we navigate these challenging times, our commitment to advocating for equitable policies and funding in the food system is unwavering, ensuring that the most vulnerable New Yorkers are not disproportionately impacted by these fiscal adjustments.

¹ [Composting's 'True Believers' Jilted as N.Y.C. Curbside Program Grows](#)

Amidst these challenging budgetary constraints, our platform is more committed than ever to fostering equitable economic development and ensuring that vulnerable communities, already disproportionately affected by economic disparities, do not face further marginalization. We seek a FY25 City Budget that will ensure all New York City families have access to healthy, affordable food, strengthen urban agriculture and support the next generation of farmers, and foster long-term resilience and economic opportunity in the City's food system.

We respectfully request your support for the inclusion of the following budget recommendations in the FY25 New York City Budget:

Strengthen Urban Agriculture & Support the Next Generation of Farmers

- **Restore \$2.6 million in funding for GreenThumb** to support the hiring of additional Community Engagement Coordinators, seasonal staff members and to increase the distribution of resources, including the delivery of compost, topsoil, and lumber, for community gardeners. Community gardens serve as vital green spaces that promote growth, unity, and environmental awareness. They also address critical challenges such as food security, environmental sustainability, and community well-being.
- **Allocate funding for the new Office of Urban Agriculture** housed within the Office of Long-Term Planning and Sustainability (OLTPS) to maintain appropriate levels of staffing and increase transparency about Office goals and activities among the community of urban agriculture practitioners. Use funding to create a position dedicated to ongoing, intentional community engagement to inform the urban agriculture advisory's development of a set of recommendations as outlined in Local Law 123.
- **Maintain the investment of \$206.5 million in baseline funding for the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) and \$20 million for the school-year Work Learn Grow (WLG) program.** Address current barriers in DYCD regulations hindering urban agriculture worksites from providing meaningful youth experiences. The city should establish a youth focus pilot program that meets the needs of local urban agriculture organizations. This program will focus on youth leadership and development in urban agriculture.
- **Restore \$7 million in NYC Community Composting program funding,** with a focus on engaging Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) in the brown bin rollout initiative. This initiative creates local jobs, reduces landfill waste, and fosters community engagement and helps move the City towards its Zero Waste goals.
- **Maintain \$10.3 million in baseline funding to support youth in urban agriculture careers,** including expanding the DOE's Career and Technical Education Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources program. Allocate substantial funding from the CTE program to support the growth of

urban agriculture initiatives and create a seamless pathway from the DOE's expansion of Food and Nutrition Education for PreK-8th Grade to Career and Technical Education programs.

Foster Long-Term Resilience And Economic Opportunity In The City's Food System

- **Increase Funding to \$4.9 million for Worker Cooperative Business Development Initiative**, up from \$3.7 million in FY24. We support the [NYC Network of Worker Cooperatives](#)' call for increased investment in the initiative that supports 15 worker cooperative support organizations, offering education, training, and assistance for new and existing cooperative small businesses. We urge that this increase in allocation help put worker cooperative support organizations that prioritize food businesses—such as RiseBoro Community Partnerships' [Worker Coop Development Program](#)—on the path to partnership within WCBDI. By prioritizing BIPOC and new groups focused on food systems businesses, which may not have had historic advantages and access to capital, we are promoting greater equity in our local food system and supporting the City's goals and values under the [Good Food Purchasing Program](#). Worker cooperatives stimulate a value-based workforce, fostering collaboration, shared prosperity, and a more inclusive economy. With this funding, we aim for specific outcomes, such as empowering marginalized communities, enhancing economic sustainability, and strengthening the local food ecosystem.
- **Fully Fund the Citywide Community Land Trust Initiative at \$3 million**. We prioritize the notion that moving public land with insecure tenure to trust land will strengthen land security and sovereignty and prioritize access to lands for people who have deep and historic community connections, especially BIPOC farmers, growers and community gardens. Launched in FY2020, the citywide CLT discretionary funding initiative has helped catalyze CLT organizing, education, training and technical assistance. We support the [NYC Community Land Initiative \(NYCCLI\)](#) in its call for full funding to support 20 organizations working to develop and preserve deeply-affordable housing, community and commercial spaces, and advance a just recovery in Black and brown NYC communities. Public land must be used for public good, and be reserved for CLTs that provide for meaningful community control. It is also critical to raise awareness that CLTs can be utilized for commercial urban agriculture. We believe that this embodies the ability to balance local land control and long-term, stewarded development that addresses changing community needs. Supporting both Community-owned businesses and Community-controlled land together is part of an effort to democratize economic development in NYC's food system.

- **Create a new Food Justice Fund to allocate \$5 million towards community-led projects to grow food justice and build wealth in BIPOC and low-income communities.** In *Food Forward NYC*, the Mayor’s Office of Food Policy calls for the establishment of a Food Justice Fund. We urge the City to invest in this program at \$5 Million and offer grants of at least \$500K to each grantee for both planning and implementation projects serving high need areas identified by Racial Equity Task Force. Funding would be allocated directly to community food organizations historically serving NYC residents with a demonstrated history of meeting the cultural and food needs of their communities. As this field of work requires long term investments, the fund should prioritize 2 year grant cycles and allow for flexibility on spending deadlines upon receiving grants. We also ask that the City explore a private-public partnership and leverage its convening power to secure matching investment from local philanthropic foundations. Types of projects funded under this pilot could include, but not be limited to:
 - Worker Ownership: activities may include establishing or providing technical assistance for worker cooperatives, Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) and other employee-ownership models within the food system. Providing access to capital for employee ownership models in the food systems is a key strategy to build community ownership within the local food system, especially in BIPOC communities that have historically had low rates of business establishment by residents.
 - Strengthen Food Systems and Supply Chain Infrastructure: activities may include creating or expanding community kitchen programs, affordable kitchen and processing space, improving efficiency in food distribution; technical assistance to support MWBE from participating in the City’s procurement contracts; local or climate-friendly food production or procurement; food recovery and waste management; support for support community food hub models, and community-owned food retail to leverage existing and growing community-owned food, health, farming and retail infrastructures; and data/technology projects.
 - Growing Food System Career Pathways: activities may include community based culinary training and workforce development opportunities to support regional rural and urban agriculture enterprises, especially for youth and BIPOC farmers, to create a pipeline of urban farming and food systems career opportunities.

Ensure All New York City Families Have Access To Healthy, Affordable Food

- **Increase and baseline funding to a total of \$60 Million for the Community Food Connection (CFC), formerly known as the Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP).** We are concerned about the apparent reappropriation of funds from last year’s budget to this incredibly impactful program that addresses the ongoing hunger crises. Given rising levels of inflation and increased demand at emergency food providers across the state, we call on the Administration not to cut CFC, but rather to increase and baseline program funding for a total of \$60 million. New data from the New York Department of Health reported that nearly one in four (24.9%) New York adults experienced food insecurity within the past 12 months. Meanwhile, according to the 2023

New York City True Cost of Living Report, published by United Way of New York City, 50% of working age New Yorkers are struggling to cover their basic needs. Families struggling to make ends meet live in every NYC neighborhood but across family composition, work status, and education, the report finds that people of color are disproportionately likely to lack adequate income. Further, 80% of households below the True Cost of Living had at least one working adult and the presence of children in the household almost doubles the likelihood that a household will have inadequate income. This alarming data aligns with testimonials from food banks and food pantries across the state, the majority of whom observed a major uptick in households served last year.

A moderate increase in funding for the CFC would accommodate the increased costs of adding fresh food into the program, rising cost of produce, and continued need, including the continuing influx of asylum seekers and other migrants seeking refuge in New York City. This increase will also help to address the inefficiencies found in using third-party vendors particularly in the procurement of kosher and halal items. Kosher- and halal-observant New Yorkers make up 21% of enrollees in GetFoodNYC and so it is critical the City's food assistance programs need to have sufficient kosher and/or halal certified product available and allocate funding to agencies that can effectively store and distribute that food in a culturally competent way. In addition to increased funding, we also request that HRA work with the Administration and Comptroller's Office to speed up payments to CFC providers, ensuring they have money up front to cover the administrative costs of implementing the program and are not required to obtain reimbursement for program services. Awaiting reimbursement is especially burdensome for new and small emergency food providers that may not have a line of credit or enough cash on hand to cover up front costs of implementing the CFC program. Finally, we urge HRA to engage in an outreach and education campaign to ensure smaller, community-based providers, especially those who have begun operating since the onset of the pandemic, are able to participate in the program, and adequately supported so that they are able to continue serving their communities.

- **Maintain the Department of Education’s Office of Food and Nutrition Services (OFNS) to support school meal operations across the five boroughs.** During this administration, New York City has taken major leaps forward with unprecedented commitment on improving school nutrition programs and ending child hunger. Through creative menu development and service advancements, plant forward meals, the full expansion of Cafeteria Enhancement to all middle and high schools, and expansion of availability of halal and kosher meals, more children are eating nutritious school meals each and every day. Because of these advancements, meal participation is back up to pre-pandemic levels, even factoring in the drop in enrollment. The data backs up this progress - there was an 8% increase in meal participation in the first part of this school year. We were pleased to see the Administration restore the originally proposed \$60 million cut as it was a direct threat to that progress and impact. We strongly urge these funds to be maintained in the final budget. Now, more than ever, as pandemic era programs come to an end and hunger continues to rise, we must continue to take every step possible to make sure NYC’s school meals program is the best in the nation and connects more children with meals. New York City must continue to lead the nation in this work by investing resources in school meal programs.
- **Invest in a 5% COLA for Human Services Workers.** Government reliance on the nonprofit human services sector for a broad range of vital public services has steadily grown over at least the past three decades. During that time, total New York City employment in the core social assistance sector doubled, increasing more than two-and-a-half times as fast as total private sector employment. However, human service workers make between 20-35 percent less in median annual wages and benefits than workers in comparable positions in the public and private sector. As the sector has stretched to meet community needs, providers are met with chronic delays in payment, underfunding, and a lack of sincere collaboration to create meaningful and lasting interventions, which strips away limited resources. Therefore, we ask that the City includes a 5% COLA (\$150 million, with \$50 million already allocated from the Workforce Enhancement Initiative) in the FY25 budget and 3% COLAs for the next two years each year on the personal services line of all human services contracts is needed to ensure this vital workforce does not slip further into poverty.
- **Invest new funding to combat hunger among older adults.** Specifically, at least \$10.9 million is needed for inflation cost for raw foods, gas and other items for the NYC Aging home delivered meals program, at a per-meal reimbursement rate of at least \$15.31 per meal (above the current rate of \$12.78 per meal). This is especially urgent this year as NYC Aging has released a home delivered meals procurement that will sustain the program for the next three or more years.
- **Maintain funding for NYC Benefits, a new program that enables CBOs to conduct benefits outreach** and connect eligible New Yorkers to the billions of dollars of government benefits that are currently underutilized. This helps to ensure that New Yorkers are aware of the supports available, that accessing those supports is easy and efficient and that New Yorkers enroll and stay enrolled in these support programs. As a result of the OTPS freeze, the funding for this program

has only been released through June 30th, 2024. The original RFP was intended to run for three years and we are only in the second half of the first year. The program must continue so that CBOs can continue to do this work.

- **Increase HRA's budget baseline to ensure it can engage community based organizations (CBOs) in benefits outreach and streamline benefits applications.** Further, we recommend additional funding to facilitate a joint application system between the SNAP program (managed by NYC HRA) and the WIC program (managed by NYS DOH), aligning with Mayor Eric Adams' pledge to develop a MyCity portal for integrated applications. This system aims to simplify the application process, making it easier and more accessible for applicants to receive the benefits they need.
- **Maintain funding for and evaluate the Grocery to Go Program.** This program originally emerged in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic as food assistance for homebound New Yorkers and has since been redesigned to provide food insecure New Yorkers who also have hypertension and/or diabetes with monthly credit to purchase groceries through an online marketplace of local grocery stores. To make the program more impactful and ensure unspent credits do not go to waste we strongly recommend: 1) the monthly credits allotted to each participating household are increased to ensure that funds are reaching the individuals that the program is intended to serve, 2) expand the list for diet related conditions to widen the scale of the program, and 3) allow for the participation of young adults who meet the other eligibility criteria. Finally, we encourage the program to allow enrollees to have the freedom to use the credits on food items of their choosing that reflect need, cultural preference, dietary or medical requirements and personal taste. We strongly encourage the DOHMH not to apply additional limitations to eligible foods and to maintain that Grocery to Go credits can purchase SNAP approved items.
- **We also urge full funding for the following City Council initiatives:**
 - \$2.8 million for the Anti-Poverty Initiative
 - \$7.26 million in FY24 for food pantries
 - \$2.134 million for Access to Healthy Food and Nutritional Education, which funds farmers markets, urban farms, community gardens, and programs to expand the use of SNAP benefits
 - \$1.5 million for the Food Access and Benefits Initiative (HRA)

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Iyeshima Harris- Ouedraogo
Policy Manager at Equity Advocates
iyeshima@nyequityadvocates.org



**Testimony Submitted by
Dyaami D’Orazio, Program Steward, Farm School NYC
For the Budget Hearing on the FY25 NYC Budget**

March 20, 2024

My name is Dyaami D’Orazio, a Program Steward with Farm School NYC. Thank you for holding a budget hearing and providing the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Farm School NYC is a grassroots organization co-founded by food justice advocates whose mission is to train NYC residents in urban agriculture, building self-reliant communities, and inspiring change around food sovereignty and social, economic and racial justice. FSNYC has multiple programs that offer courses, workshops, builds, and other technical training opportunities that provide local NYC residents with the tools they need to uplift their communities and increase access to nutritional food. FSNYC receives about 200+ applications annually for our citywide program and we have successfully trained over 200 community leaders in urban agriculture and food justice.

Due to this demand in New York City for environmental and food justice, we need as much support for urban agriculture and conservation practices as possible. There is a high demand across the city for climate change awareness and practices, urban agriculture to provide quality, nutritious and affordable food, and for all of this to be done with a reparative and intentional justice lens. We must shift the narrative for our most vulnerable communities before it is too late.

Farm School NYC is a member of [NYC Food Policy Alliance](#), a multi-sector group of 70+ food system stakeholders from across New York, including frontline CBOs directly impacted by food insecurity, that work together to identify and advocate for public policies and funding that not only respond to our current economic and hunger crises, but also address the ongoing vulnerabilities and injustices of the food system. We approach this work through an anti-racism lens to ensure communities of color and other systemically under-resourced communities benefit from public policies and funding.

It is crucial to acknowledge the challenging fiscal landscape shaped by Mayor Eric Adams' proposed 15% budget cuts across New York City's agencies and those proposed in the FY25 Preliminary Budget. The proposed \$60 million cut to the Department of Education's Office of Food and Nutrition Services (OFNS) threatens the progress made over the years to ensure healthier, more nutritious school meals. The \$3 million budget reduction for the NYC Compost initiative has led to over 100 layoffs, effectively dismantling the city's local composting programs for residents¹. Rather than cutting critical community programs, the City should invest in and enhance essential services that are integral to the health and

¹ [Composting's 'True Believers' Jilted as N.Y.C. Curbside Program Grows](#)



welfare of the city and its residents—including the thousands of new arrivals who are in need of services and support.

Our platform, advocating for enhanced economic development and support for marginalized communities, becomes more crucial in this context. As we navigate these challenging times, our commitment to advocating for equitable policies and funding in the food system is unwavering, ensuring that the most vulnerable New Yorkers are not disproportionately impacted by these fiscal adjustments.

Amidst these challenging budgetary constraints, our platform is more committed than ever to fostering equitable economic development and ensuring that vulnerable communities, already disproportionately affected by economic disparities, do not face further marginalization. We seek a FY25 City Budget that will ensure all New York City families have access to healthy, affordable food, strengthen urban agriculture and support the next generation of farmers, and foster long-term resilience and economic opportunity in the City's food system.

We respectfully request your support for the inclusion of the following budget recommendations in the FY25 New York City Budget:

Strengthen Urban Agriculture & Support the Next Generation of Farmers

- **Restore \$2.6 million in funding for GreenThumb** to support the hiring of additional Community Engagement Coordinators, seasonal staff members and to increase the distribution of resources, including the delivery of compost, topsoil, and lumber, for community gardeners. Community gardens serve as vital green spaces that promote growth, unity, and environmental awareness. They also address critical challenges such as food security, environmental sustainability, and community well-being.
- **Allocate funding for the new Office of Urban Agriculture** housed within the Office of Long-Term Planning and Sustainability (OLTPS) to maintain appropriate levels of staffing and increase transparency about Office goals and activities among the community of urban agriculture practitioners. Use funding to create a position dedicated to ongoing, intentional community engagement to inform the urban agriculture advisory's development of a set of recommendations as outlined in Local Law 123.
- **Maintain the investment of \$206.5 million in baseline funding for the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) and \$20 million for the school-year Work Learn Grow (WLG) program.** Address current barriers in DYCD regulations hindering urban agriculture worksites from providing meaningful youth experiences. The city should establish a youth focus pilot program that meets the needs of local urban agriculture organizations. This program will focus on youth leadership and development in urban agriculture.

FARM SCHOOL NYC

- **Restore \$7 million in NYC Community Composting program funding**, with a focus on engaging Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) in the brown bin rollout initiative. This initiative creates local jobs, reduces landfill waste, and fosters community engagement and helps move the City towards its Zero Waste goals.
- **Maintain \$10.3 million in baseline funding to support youth in urban agriculture careers**, including expanding the DOE's Career and Technical Education Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources program. Allocate substantial funding from the CTE program to support the growth of urban agriculture initiatives and create a seamless pathway from the DOE's expansion of Food and Nutrition Education for PreK-8th Grade to Career and Technical Education programs.

Foster Long-Term Resilience And Economic Opportunity In The City's Food System

- **Increase Funding to \$4.9 million for Worker Cooperative Business Development Initiative**, up from \$3.7 million in FY24. We support the [NYC Network of Worker Cooperatives](#)' call for increased investment in the initiative that supports 15 worker cooperative support organizations, offering education, training, and assistance for new and existing cooperative small businesses. We urge that this increase in allocation help put worker cooperative support organizations that prioritize food businesses—such as RiseBoro Community Partnerships' [Worker Coop Development Program](#)—on the path to partnership within WCBDI. By prioritizing BIPOC and new groups focused on food systems businesses, which may not have had historic advantages and access to capital, we are promoting greater equity in our local food system and supporting the City's goals and values under the [Good Food Purchasing Program](#). Worker cooperatives stimulate a value-based workforce, fostering collaboration, shared prosperity, and a more inclusive economy. With this funding, we aim for specific outcomes, such as empowering marginalized communities, enhancing economic sustainability, and strengthening the local food ecosystem.
- **Fully Fund the Citywide Community Land Trust Initiative at \$3 million**. We prioritize the notion that moving public land with insecure tenure to trust land will strengthen land security and sovereignty and prioritize access to lands for people who have deep and historic community connections, especially BIPOC farmers, growers and community gardens. Launched in FY2020, the citywide CLT discretionary funding initiative has helped catalyze CLT organizing, education, training and technical assistance. We support the [NYC Community Land Initiative \(NYCCLI\)](#) in its call for full funding to support 20 organizations working to develop and preserve deeply-affordable housing, community and commercial spaces, and advance a just recovery in Black and brown NYC communities. Public land must be used for public good, and be reserved for CLTs that provide for meaningful community control. It is also critical to raise awareness that CLTs can be utilized for commercial urban agriculture. We believe that this embodies the ability to balance local land control and long-term, stewarded development that addresses changing community needs. Supporting both Community-owned businesses and Community-controlled land together is part of an effort to democratize economic development in NYC's food system.



New York City Council Committee on Parks
Thursday, March 21, 2024
Committee on Parks and Recreation - Preliminary Budget Hearing
Friends of Corlears Hook Park

Good afternoon, my name is Michael Marino and I represent Friends of Corlears Hook Park. We are a member of the Play Fair for Parks Coalition, which includes over 400 organizations from across the five boroughs, many of whom will testify today. We thank the City Council Committee on Parks Chair Shekar Krishnan for holding this hearing.

New Yorkers deserve a fully funded, safe, clean, green and resilient parks system. The budget cuts to NYC Parks this year and the proposed budget for next fiscal year jeopardize the very heart of our communities. These cuts will make it even more difficult for the already understaffed, under-resourced Parks Department to carry out the basic work needed to ensure parks are equitable and accessible for all New Yorkers.

Beyond parks, these cuts will hinder the agency's ability to manage its 15 miles of beaches, 51 recreation centers, 65 pools, 9,900 acres of natural areas, 2,300 athletic courts, 800 ballfields, and 1,000 playgrounds. They will inequitably impact the well-being and quality of life of countless individuals and families. Parks are an invaluable resource that foster physical and mental health, provide spaces for social interaction, and mitigate the climate crisis.

- The NYC Parks budget has been cut by 5%, or \$25M, for this fiscal year.
- The FY2025 Preliminary Budget is \$583M, nearly \$55M less than the budget for this fiscal year.
- The hiring freeze and reduced budget will result in nearly 1,000 fewer parks workers, making it impossible for the agency to ensure parks are safe, clean, green, and resilient across the city.
- If enacted, New Yorkers can expect trash strewn parks and playgrounds, delayed activation of sprinklers and water fountains amidst unprecedented summer heat, reduced hours and public programming at rec centers, long term bathroom closures, and neglected tree canopy care.
- NYC Parks now has fewer workers than it did before the pandemic despite increased demand and clear need for these spaces, and thousands fewer workers than it had decades ago.

- NYC Parks is chronically underfunded and understaffed: there are not nearly enough maintenance workers and PEP officers to keep our parks clean and safe.
- The NYC budget has grown by 127% since 1980, and every other frontline city agency's budget has grown by between 127%-165%, while NYC Parks has only grown by 72%.
- We demand 1% of the city budget for NYC Parks. Mayor Adams repeatedly committed to this investment but hasn't yet followed through.
- Parks are critical infrastructure for public health and safety and are drivers of social equity. They should be funded as such.
- All New Yorkers deserve safe, clean, green and resilient parks, pools, beaches and rec centers.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M. Marino".

Michael T. Marino
Board President
Friends of Corlears Hook Park

TESTIMONY FROM FRIENDS OF DAG HAMMARSKJOLD PLAZA: BUDGET HEARING FOR NYC PARKS & RECREATION 3/21/2024

We stand united with New Yorkers for Parks, the Nature Conservancy, environmental and park organizations who demand a minimum 1 percent of the FY 2025 annual budget be allocated to NYC Parks Department. Social equity and the pressing need for Maintenance and Operations of parkland applies to all neighborhoods. Clean, green, safe public spaces are essential!

We continually hear from our members and UN visitors that Dag Hammarskjold Plaza in east midtown Manhattan doesn't feel safe. We are asked why the City turns a blind eye to this highly visible Gateway to the United Nations with prestigious institutions facing the park, including the Japan Society, the Family School, the Holy Family Church, residential and office buildings.

We are relieved that the POP funding was restored because their once daily cleaning of the plaza makes a huge difference. Although we contract part-time custodial pan and broom service, we lack the resources to fund the Plaza's outsized sanitation needs.

Our volunteers encounter discarded syringes, liquor bottles, human feces, graffiti. The concentration of shelters in the area with little police intervention and no PEP officers enables shelter "clients" to engage in rowdy and sometimes illicit behavior. Homeless encampments are on the rise.

Hammarskjold Plaza's 6 fountains have been inoperative for 3 years due to aged pumps and waste lines flooding the Plaza and damaging adjacent properties. The empty basins are used as sleeping quarters and urinals.

Thanks to City Council capital funding, construction for a \$4 million renovation was scheduled to start in January 2024, but a permit from DOB to a residential building overlooking the park's retaining wall for facade repairs resulted in scaffolding/ fencing that blocks DPR construction, usurps public usage and leaves our own program and events in limbo.

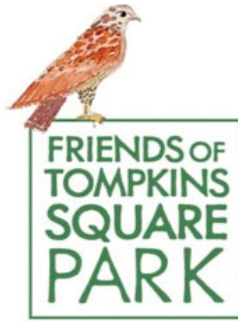
The park's legendary use for UN protests, marches and cultural rallies takes a heavy toll with trash and food littering the Plaza. We contract the Doe Fund to empty twenty 36-gallon receptacles twice daily, depositing the bagged litter on the curb of Second Avenues but the cost of pan and broom service has skyrocketed. The cluster of parks that serve the UN/Turtle Bay area suffer from an overworked, overwhelmed agency that has experienced chronic underfunding.

One percent is a good starting point and we support the campaign to adequately fund a parks system that has the potential to be among the world's finest. Our nonprofit 501c3 has transformed the Plaza and its garden into a midtown oasis, but we have grave concerns about the future. THE CITY MUST DO IT'S FAIR SHARE!

Sherrill Kazan, President

Anne Hersh, Director of Development

Friends of Dag Hammarskjold Plaza is a tax-exempt nonprofit 501c3 organization. Office: 224 E. 47 St. Rm. 304, NYC 10017. Email: fdhp@hammarskjoldplaza.org ~ website: dagplaza.org



Testimony for NYC Council Committee on Parks on March 21,2024
Prepared by Kathleen Corrigan MD

On behalf of our volunteer group, Friends of Tompkins Square Park, I am testifying that NYC Parks deserve 1% of the City Budget. We are a member of the Play Fair for Parks Coalition, which includes over 400 organizations from across the five boroughs, many of whom will testify today. We thank the City Council Committee on Parks Chair Shekar Krishnan for holding this hearing.

Tompkins Square Park, with 10.5 acres, lacks a fulltime gardener and is cleaned by a small maintenance staff directed by their Crew Chief. Currently, the parks staff is responding to unexpected challenges as asylum seekers take respite in the SE quadrant of the park while they await entry to the St Brigid's Church reticketing center.

As local mutual aid groups provide meals to the asylum seekers, our parks staff has increased trash collections & maintenance. We have witnessed their compassion, empathy and willingness to accept extra work to carry out their basic duties.

You may be aware of the shooting in the park last Saturday, and again, we witnessed the dedication and resiliency of our parks staff as they responded with "grace under pressure" to this tragic event.

Over the past year, as our group swept under benches, collected trash, weeded, amended the soil, planted & watered hundreds of new plants. we learned firsthand the tremendous amount of physical labor done by our parks staff. Our parks staff is critical to a thriving park and a thriving community.

Thank you.

New York City Council Committee on Parks
Thursday, March 21, 2024
Committee on Parks and Recreation - Preliminary Budget Hearing
Elissa Iberti, Steering Committee Chair Friends of WNYC Transmitter Park

Good afternoon, my name is Elissa Iberti, and I represent the Friends of WNYC Transmitter Park, Greenpoint, Brooklyn. We are a member of the Play Fair for Parks Coalition, which includes over 400 organizations from across the five boroughs, many of whom will testify today. We thank the City Council Committee on Parks Chair Shekar Krishnan for holding this hearing.

New Yorkers deserve a fully funded, safe, clean, green and resilient parks system. The budget cuts to NYC Parks this year and the proposed budget for next fiscal year jeopardize the very heart of our communities. These cuts will make it even more difficult for the already understaffed, under-resourced Parks Department to carry out the basic work needed to ensure parks are equitable and accessible for all New Yorkers. In WNYC Transmitter Park this would mean limited or no grounds crews or gardeners, reduced trash pick-up and trash bags sitting at respective staging areas for pick-up longer, inviting rodents back to the site after methodical rodent prevention practices. The servicing of the park for regular rodent mitigation would also be in jeopardy placing the park in danger of being overrun with rats. A situation that has occurred during COVID and lingered into 2023.

Additionally the maintenance and services to our park are already reduced to as needed, so to cut further is to risk a further decline in the health and safety of not only our park but all parks. With the NYC Parks budget already cut by 5%, or \$25M, for this fiscal year, what will it take to adequately fund our public open spaces? NYC as a major metropolis cannot afford a hiring freeze that will result in nearly 1,000 fewer parks workers, making it impossible for the agency to ensure parks are safe, clean, green, and resilient across the city. We ALL deserve better.

Beyond parks, these cuts will hinder the agency's ability to manage its 15 miles of beaches, 51 recreation centers, 65 pools, 9,900 acres of natural areas, 2,300 athletic courts, 800 ballfields, and 1,000 playgrounds. They will inequitably impact the well-being and quality of life of countless individuals and families. Parks are an invaluable resource that foster physical and mental health, provide spaces for social interaction, and mitigate the climate crisis.

We thank you for the time and remain committed to NYC Parks and Public Open Green Spaces.





The Olmsted Center
Flushing Meadows Corona Park
117-02 Roosevelt Avenue
Flushing, NY 11368
646-360-0203

**Testimony: Historic House Trust of New York City
NYC Council Parks & Recreation Committee FY25 Preliminary Budget Hearing
Thursday, March 21, 2024**

My name is Giulietta Fiore, and I'm testifying on behalf of the Historic House Trust of New York City. First, I want to thank Chair Krishnan for holding this hearing, and for advocating for our critical parks infrastructure. As a member of the Play Fair Coalition, the Historic House Trust calls upon the city to invest in our parks and their diverse resources by dedicating 1% of the budget to NYC Parks.

As some of the oldest structures in New York, the 23 city-owned sites that we help steward sit on over 400 acres of land that have remained greenspace for hundreds of years. Thanks to the partnership of over 20 community-based nonprofits that operate the sites as museums, these historic places tie the history of New York City to our present day lives, and provide opportunities for residents to be outside, to learn, and to engage with their neighbors. Located in areas that are often underserved by larger cultural institutions, our partner sites serve many communities that are historically underrepresented. Head to the Valentine-Varian House to learn about one of the earliest interracial housing complexes in the Bronx, the Allerton Coops. Or experience LGBTQ+ history first-hand through exhibitions and photography workshops at the Alice Austen House on Staten Island. Experience the annual Thunderbird American Indian Powwow with the Queens County Farm Museum, or purchase vegetables farmed in Brooklyn through the Wyckoff House Museum's Youth Garden Apprentice Program.

The budget cuts to NYC Parks jeopardize the very heart of these communities. These cuts will make it even more difficult for the already understaffed, under-resourced Parks Department to carry out the basic work needed to ensure parks are equitable and accessible for all New Yorkers. **Especially in communities that are unable to supplement NYC Parks services with private funding, these public spaces have begun to suffer.** Despite the best efforts of hardworking NYC Parks employees who are constantly being asked to do "more with less," years of disinvestment in NYC Parks have taken a toll on these public resources. In addition to trash buildup and overgrown lawns, we're seeing unsafe conditions on pathways, deteriorating roofs and wood siding, water infiltration, and even hate speech graffiti. Without funding for maintenance workers, specialized tradespeople like carpenters, and general investment across all five boroughs, **we fear that communities will no longer see these park resources as safe and welcoming places.** By allocating more funds to NYC Parks in the FY25 budget, you will be supporting livable communities citywide, and empowering millions of New Yorkers in their own communities.

On behalf of our partners and neighbors, thank you for this opportunity to voice our needs, and for hearing our call to help sustain the places that make New York City our home.



**Jamaica Bay -
Rockaway Parks
Conservancy**



**New York City Council Committee on Parks & Recreation
Thursday, March 21, 2024 | Preliminary Budget Hearing
Terri Carta, Jamaica Bay-Rockaway Parks Conservancy**

My name is Terri Carta, and I represent Jamaica Bay-Rockaway Parks Conservancy, a nonprofit partner to New York City, State, and our National park agencies that collectively oversee 10,000 acres of public parklands, 26,000 acres of open water and wetland environments, and 11 miles of Atlantic Ocean beaches. We are a member of the Play Fair for Parks Coalition, which includes over 400 organizations from across the five boroughs. We thank the City Council Committee on Parks Chair Shekar Krishnan for holding this preliminary budget hearing and his unwavering support for our city's parks and open spaces.

New Yorkers deserve a fully funded, equitable, safe, clean, green and resilient parks system. To achieve this, the NYC Department of Parks & Recreation must have sufficient resources and support from this Administration. When Mayor Adams took office in 2022, the agency's budget comprised approximately 0.8% of the city's total. However, despite campaigning on a promise to increase the Parks budget to at least 1% of the total NYC budget, Mayor Adams has cut the Parks budget over the past two fiscal years that his Administration has overseen.

In the Preliminary Fiscal Year 2025 budget, NYC Parks' share comprises only 0.5% of the city total, \$55 million less than the agency's budget in FY 2024. The cuts to NYC Parks this year and the proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2025 jeopardize the very heart of our communities. These cuts will make it even more difficult for the already understaffed, under-resourced Parks Department to carry out the basic work needed to ensure that parks are equitable and accessible for all New Yorkers.

These budget cuts will hinder the agency's ability to manage its 15 miles of beaches, 51 recreation centers, 65 pools, 9,900 acres of natural areas, 2,300 athletic courts, 800 ballfields, and 1,000 playgrounds. The cuts will inequitably impact the well-being and quality of life of countless individuals and families who depend on these natural and cultural resources. Parks are vital infrastructure that foster physical and mental health, provide spaces for social interaction, are drivers of social equity, and mitigate the climate crisis. They need to be funded as such.

I would like to also call attention to how these budget cuts will undermine efforts to restore, improve and sustain our city's most vulnerable landscapes – forest, woodland, freshwater

wetland, and salt marsh ecosystems. Specifically, I want to underscore the need for increased funding to support and expand the Natural Resources Group (NRG) within NYC Parks.

In the Jamaica Bay-Rockaway catchment area, NRG is restoring lost wetland habitat at Rockaway Community Park, on the front doorsteps of the Ocean Bay NYCHA campus where my organization regularly facilitates outdoor environmental education and other free community programs. NRG is also replacing eroded sediment and planting grasses at Four Sparrow Marsh, hemmed in by Flatbush Avenue and the Belt Parkway on the northwest side of Jamaica Bay, where JBRPC removed 6 tons of trash and marine debris last summer with our Wetlands Fellowship workforce development program. And NRG staff at the Greenbelt Native Plant Nursery in Floyd Bennett Field collect and propagate local seeds from native species and grow them for restoration projects in the parks just referenced and at sites across the five boroughs. These are climate forward, locally focused initiatives – exactly what NYC needs to invest more in, not cut budget from.

As a public-private partnership, JBRPC raises public and private funds to support, complement, and enhance the work of our agency partners. Over the past few years, city and state elected officials have generously supported our work by providing much needed discretionary funding to our organization, allowing us to fill gaps in park agencies and provide vital services to neighborhoods and constituencies most in need. We are thankful for the support provided by the Council over the years.

Last year, Conservancy Education programs engaged over 5,000 students from 40+ schools in over 140 park-based field trips with hands-on learning about the ecology and stewardship of our coastal environment. In 2023, the Conservancy removed over 11 tons (22,000 pounds) of trash and marine debris from Jamaica Bay and Rockaway parks, with over 750 volunteers contributing more than 1,350 service hours. Over 3,300 people participated in 98 free events, including our signature *Jamaica Bay Festival* with 39 events across Jamaica Bay and Rockaway in a single day, and our popular Discover Jamaica Bay series. In last year's 6-month Wetlands Fellowship program, 8 Fellows removed over 6 tons of marine debris, planted more than 70,000 native plants, and restored 50 acres of vital wetlands habitat across all corners of Jamaica Bay.

With funding support in Fiscal Year 2025, the Conservancy can immediately expand our Wetlands Fellowship to hire more local young adults, engage more students and educators in our school-day and after-school Education programs, and better engage local communities in volunteer stewardship and free public programs.

In closing, I would like to thank the Council Committee on Parks and Recreation and recognize the leadership of Chair Krishnan in advocating sufficient budget allocation for NYC Parks. For supporting the ongoing stewardship and improvement of parks and wetland areas around Jamaica Bay, I want to also recognize and thank three great local champions of JBRPC's park-based programs, Councilmembers Selvena Brooks-Powers, Joann Ariola, and Mercedes Narcisse. With your collective support and partnership, JBRPC will continue to be great

stewards of our parks and provide much needed free programming to Jamaica Bay and Rockaway residents, students, and future environmental leaders.

Thank you for your time and support of education programs in our public parks.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Terri Carta', with a stylized, cursive script.

Terri Carta
Executive Director, Jamaica Bay-Rockaway Parks Conservancy

cc: Majority Whip Selvena Brooks-Powers, City Council District 31
Council Member Joann Ariola, City Council District 32
Council Member Mercedes Narcisse, City Council District 46



TESTIMONY SUPPORTING FULLY FUNDING NYC'S URBAN GREEN FOREST AND COMPOSTING ON PARK LAND

New York City Council Parks and Recreation Committee Budget Hearing
March 21, 2024

My name is Jane Selden, and I chair a waste reduction committee at the climate activist group, 350NYC. **In recognition of the environmental benefits thriving green spaces and community composting bring to our city, we urge the Adams Administration to fully fund NYC's urban forest in the FY25 budget and to permit composting in city parks.**

As we face rising temperatures and more extreme weather events due to the worsening climate crisis, cities need to become "spongier." Our public parks, street trees, and open spaces are essential tools for stormwater management. Flooding of NYC streets and subways, from Superstorm Sandy in 2012 to last fall's torrential rains, underscore the threat of serious water damage to city structures as climate change accelerates. Nature-based stormwater management techniques require well-maintained parks, abundant street trees, and permeable open spaces to enhance resiliency. Trees also serve to filter harmful pollutants and mitigate the urban heat island effect, which has a disproportionate impact on low-income neighborhoods and communities of color. Nurturing and expanding our urban forest should be a top budget priority, not a subject of discussion when city budget reductions are considered.

Compost plays an essential role in flood mitigation because of its ability to retain up to seven times its weight in water. The city needs the high-quality compost created by Community Composting organizations to enhance the climate resiliency of its urban forest and other green infrastructure. This is one of the reasons it makes no sense for the Parks Department to be evicting Big Reuse, one of the city's largest Community Composting non-profits, from its composting site in Queensbridge Park in order to replace it with a parking lot for vehicles being used to renovate the park. There are a number of spaces nearby where these vehicles can go.

For years the Parks Department enjoyed a mutually beneficial relationship with Big Reuse as well as with the Lower East Side Ecology Center, which operated a compost site in the East River Park. In exchange for the use of approximately one-acre of city park land, these organizations combined leaves and other yard waste from these properties with food scraps collected at local drop-off sites to create soil-enriching compost, which is then provided to the parks for free and is used to nourish the degraded soil of the city's street trees. Last year, Big Reuse diverted over 2.3 million pounds of food scraps and yard waste from landfill by converting it high-quality

compost. Compost processing sites are a natural fit in parks and deserve to have a permanent home there.

We ask that the Parks Department recognize the value of allowing composting to continue in city parks and that the Adams Administration follow through on their PlanNYC climate resilience plan to expand the city's green spaces and tree canopy coverage by fully funding our urban forest in the 2024 budget.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jane Selden
350NYC

Demi Amideneau
Member, Local 371, SSEU, DC 37
Before the City Council Parks Committee
FY 2025 Preliminary Budget
March 21, 2024

Good afternoon. My name is Demi Amideneau and I am a member of Local 371, DC 37. I am thankful to the City Council for their one shot funding of Play Fair lines in Parks, but it is not enough. These employment lines need to be baselined and added to the annual budget. Every year, over 50 staff don't know if they will have a job on July 1st, and they don't find out until a week or two before then. This is no way to run a city agency that cares about its employees. People have bills to pay and families to feed and this circumstance forces people to look for new jobs and leave our agency. As a result, we experience high turnover rates and lose invaluable institutional knowledge and talent. As you can imagine, this puts our agency at an incredible disadvantage constantly having to scramble for new staff and onboarding them. We are forced to take up the extra work when we are already doing so much. It doesn't have to be like this. \$2.5 million dollars towards these employment lines can transform our capacity at Parks to maintain healthier forests and wetlands that New Yorkers deserve. It will offer the job security people need to live healthy and safe lives. It is time the City invests in its green workforce as it has promised. Thank you.

Elise Herschlag
Member, Local 371, SSEU, DC 37
Before the City Council Parks Committee
FY 2025 Preliminary Budget
March 21, 2024

Good afternoon, my name is Elise Herschlag. I am a constituent of City Council District 22, in Astoria Queens. Thank you to the City Council who serve on this committee and thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My neighborhood park is Astoria Park, but I've spent a lot of time in forests all over the city like Idlewild, Alley Pond, and Cunningham Park. I've grown to love our city's natural areas and have become heavily invested in their future.

I'm here today to ask the council to restore the \$2.5 million in funding for Fiscal Year 25 for the 51 forestry management staff whose jobs are set to expire in June.

PlaNYC, the ten year, citywide, sustainability plan set by the Adams administration includes initiatives to quote "achieve 30% canopy cover", improve the health of our forested areas, and grow NYC's green workforce' end quote.

Forestry management staff are a critical part to achieving these goals . They plant thousands of trees, slow the damage of invasive species, care for street trees, steward our urban forest with volunteers, and provide 51 green job opportunities. Cutting these positions is completely antithetical to the PlaNYC initiatives.

We can't say as a city that we prioritize forests and then CUT all the jobs that take care of them. It's a disservice to staff, but it's also a disservice to citizens like myself, who want fresher, cooler, air that the forests provide.

Thank you for your time.

Isaac Kirk-Davidoff
Member, Local 371, SSEU, DC 37
Before the City Council Parks Committee
FY 2025 Preliminary Budget
March 21, 2024

Good afternoon. My name is Isaac Kirk-Davidoff. I am speaking today as a parks worker, a New Yorker, a union member, and a lifelong parks user. I urge the City Council to restore and baseline funding for the 51 forest restoration workers, and to create and baseline funding for a citywide trails formalization program.

My lower back can testify that this is hard, technical, skilled work. And it cannot rely on just volunteer and seasonal labor. Not renewing these lines will mean scores of acres of forest, dozens of miles of trails will go without maintenance and care for 1, maybe more years. Already there is so much more to do than what we have the staff for.

These 51 people are so called "full time seasonals." Picture the weight it puts on you to not know until the end of June if you have a job in July. Picture the uncertainty, the stress, the competition for the one or two permanent positions that open up. There's a banner hanging in the forest restoration trailer that everyone signs when they leave - after a few months it is already filling up with signatures.

Last year, the Mayor made a promise to finally fund a citywide trails program, just like his promise to fund 1% for parks. But just as work plans were being made and resumes were being sent in, the funding was paused, then canceled. Trails are how working class people can connect to wildness, for free, right in the middle of the city. Good trail work lasts for decades, it's strong, resilient, made of rock and timber. Right now the city is giving us a foundation built of sand. Thank you.

Meredith Thomson
Member, Local 371, SSEU, DC 37
Before the City Council Parks Committee
FY 2025 Preliminary Budget
March 21, 2024

Good afternoon. My name is Meredith Thomson. I am a member of Local 371, DC 37, a Parks Employee, and a Natural Areas Super Steward. Thank you for your consideration today. Before I begin, I would like to acknowledge that the land we are here fighting to continue caring for today is the ancestral homeland of the Lenni-Lenape People, the original caretakers of what is now New York City. If I may make the stretch, I believe we all stand in front of you today to ask the City Council to permanently fund the care for this Land, because we acknowledge that it is our responsibility to do so.

- The time scales between humans and trees differ by an order of magnitude. As such, our work must operate according to both timescales. We simply cannot do our jobs if our funding is not permanently stable.
- Every single one of our projects requires at least 3 year's worth of operating directly on the land, let alone the planning required to facilitate the project. A single restoration site needs to be prepared **by crew leads**, truckloads of debris removed, invasive species and underground seed banks cleared **by skilled gardeners**, trees ordered **by foresters**, volunteers educated and mobilized by **Stewardship**, trees planted **and** cared for **by volunteers and gardeners**, and **most importantly**, trees cared **about** by the park patrons who were brought together in community by Parks employees. We have **12,000 acres** to restore.
- This doesn't even cover the ongoing endangered species monitoring and ecological assessments completed **by ecologists (of which I'm one)**, or the pilot projects designed to improve our restoration protocols for the land we benefit from. Our city cannot afford to lose Play Fair.

If you will permanently fund Play Fair, for fiscal year 2025 and beyond, I can promise you we will be here, doing everything in our human power to help protect and care for the city's residents, human and non-human, every year, for the future. Thank you.



LIUNA!

Feel the Power



**New York City Council Committee on Parks
Thursday, March 21, 2024
Committee on Parks and Recreation - Preliminary Budget Hearing
Chris Loscalzo, Laborers' Local 1010 LECET**

Good afternoon, my name is Chris Loscalzo, and I represent the Local 1010 Laborers-Employers Cooperation and Education Trust (1010 LECET). 1010 LECET brings Laborers' Local 1010 and its signatory contractors together to address issues of importance to both. Laborers and our employers share a lot of common ground. Working as a team, we secure projects and jobs, increase union-sector market share, advertise our services, develop a workforce, and advance shared market-related interests. Local 1010 members work together to build streets, bridges, and highways throughout the five boroughs, **in addition to building parks for NYC families to enjoy.**

We are a proud member of the Play Fair for Parks Coalition, which includes over 400 organizations from across the five boroughs, many of whom will testify today. We thank the City Council Committee on Parks Chair Shekar Krishnan for holding this hearing.

New Yorkers deserve a fully funded, safe, clean, green, and resilient parks system. The budget cuts to NYC Parks this year and the proposed budget for next fiscal year jeopardize the very heart of our communities. **For years, Local 1010 and 1010 LECET have witnessed NYC Parks projects, for example, suffer from delays, waste, wage theft, and corruption. Proposed budget cuts to the NYC Parks agency would be further devastating to parks infrastructure and**

recreational and green space for all New Yorkers. We don't need more cuts to Parks. We need investment, transparency, oversight, and accountability to receive better results for New Yorkers and the workers tasked with performing Parks work across the City.

Beyond parks, these cuts will hinder the agency's ability to manage its 15 miles of beaches, 51 recreation centers, 65 pools, 9,900 acres of natural areas, 2,300 athletic courts, 800 ballfields, and 1,000 playgrounds, **including increased stress to the agency's ability to hire staff to vet and award quality contractors in NYC.** Parks are critical infrastructure for public health and safety and are drivers of social equity. They should be funded as such.

In conclusion, preserving and expanding all NYC Parks funding is crucial to the agency's ability to hire staff to vet and award quality contractors in NYC. I appreciate your consideration of our comments. We look forward to continuing to work with the Council to create meaningful accountability in our city.

Chris Loscalzo
Laborers' Local 1010 LECET

**Testimony of Dilcy Benn, President of Local 1505, District Council 37
before the City Council Committee on Parks and Recreation
FY 2025 Preliminary Budget
March 21, 2024**

Good afternoon Chair Krishnan and fellow members of the City Council Parks and Recreation Committee. My name is Dilcy Benn and I am the President of Local 1505 of DC 37 representing close to one thousand City Parks Workers (also known as CPWs), as well as seasonal workers who primarily work in the NYC Parks and Recreation Department in all five boroughs performing clean up and conducting maintenance in all city parks.

Here we are again. I appear before you to ask for the restoration of the 100 CPW lines that were funded by the City Council last year and referred to as part of the “Play Fair” lines. These 100 CPWs are essential, especially in parks that have second shifts. Without these workers, the parks will be overrun with garbage and rats. This is counter to the Mayor’s war on rats. How do you combat the rat problem if you don’t have the staff to clean up the garbage in the parks? The result will be an endless supply of food for the rats and other vermin to eat.

In addition, these second shift workers were told they would be made permanent. How are they going to be made permanent if their jobs are on the line?

Furthermore, my members risk their own safety when they go to lock up the park. They have been threatened and even assaulted by park goers who do not want to leave the park. My members are minority women who work alone. As the weather gets warmer, this dangerous scenario will become more frequent.

The parks need to be kept clean so thousands of New Yorkers, as well as visitors, can enjoy these beautiful open spaces. We need dedicated parks workers doing the work necessary to upkeep these places.

Speaker Adrienne Adams recognizes the important work my seasonal workers perform in this city. I applaud her proposal in her State of the City address to create a pipeline to permanent civil service jobs for seasonal workers. This will be a game changer and lifeline for so many in this city.

I should be here today requesting for additional workers to ensure that parks are kept clean, but instead I am here asking for a restoration. We need to restore and baseline these positions so these workers do not have to worry about losing their jobs annually. This is a horrible way to live and it is not right for people to live with such uncertainty.

Last week, I saw the parks were filled with individuals and families out enjoying the beautiful warm weather. As the weather gets warmer, these parks will be heavily utilized. We will need these City Parks Workers and seasonal workers more than ever. There is plenty of work to be done to maintain and clean these parks day in and day out.

On behalf of my members, I want to thank our partners in the Play Fair Coalition for standing with us and advocating alongside us for more funding for parks.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and I look forward to working with you to restore and baseline the funding to the Parks Department. I will be happy to take any questions you may have.



March 21, 2024

Thank you for the opportunity to testify regarding the City budget vis-a-vis Parks.

It is paramount that I share with you the concerns of my organization and the constituency it advocates for, particularly regarding the lack of resources and support parks receive to fulfill their critical role in our communities.

The city's parks have received inadequate funding for over four decades, and the meager funds that are allocated to them are inequitably distributed. Marine Park, the largest city park in Brooklyn has nearly 800 acres of green space across its natural grasslands, salt marshes and its recreational areas. It has a range of uses including leisure and sporting activities, ecological conservation, and outdoor recreation. With proper support it could stand alongside the likes of Central and Prospect Parks as a preeminent NYC destination. Yet it has nowhere near the needed amount of staffing and upkeep for a park of its size and potential.

As things stand, even if it were to receive additional staffing and resources, this would likely come at the expense and to the detriment of another city park. Marine Park Alliance works hard to bridge this gap, providing volunteer programs to maintain the park and free recreational and cultural programming to enrich the experience of all park visitors. Yet MPA and other charitable organizations that champion Marine Park can only do so much. For a thriving, healthy green space, services like these should be ensured through the city's budget.

Furthermore, as a vital point of connection between social service providers and the people who depend on those services, parks should have an ample budget, not face steep budget cuts that result in the loss of critical Parks jobs and services. The Covid-19 pandemic underscored the need for parks and shown just how stretched their already thin resources are.

I implore you to change this disheartening status quo - please dedicate 1% of the budget to New York City's Parks.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Margot Perron'.

Margot Perron
Board Member

**New York City Council
Parks Committee Preliminary Budget Hearing
March 23, 2024**

Testimony By: Eric Fung, NYC Parks, Community Associate

My name is Eric Fung, and I am a field ecologist for the Natural Resources Group of the Environment and Planning division of NYC Parks. I would like to thank the Committee on Parks and Recreation for providing the opportunity to provide testimony regarding the Fiscal Year 2025 budget for NYC Parks.

For decades, scientific and social research has highlighted the importance of green spaces for physical and mental well-being. The term “biophilia” was first used in 1973 by the psychoanalyst Erich Fromm to describe “the passionate love of life and of all that is alive.” Human beings have an innate connection to the natural world, and in an increasingly urbanized planet, our access to green space is becoming more crucial than ever. For over 50% of New Yorkers, the forested areas and wetlands of the parks system represent their only access to the natural world.

To hear that the projected budget for FY25 is nearly \$55 million less than the previous fiscal year is truly disheartening. Countless invaluable Parks staff members who have dedicated their careers to providing equitable green space access and to caring for our natural areas are set to lose their jobs in the coming months. In the face of mounting climate instability, natural areas management is now even more vital towards developing a climate resilient NYC. The extensive ecosystem services high-quality forests and wetlands provide include flood mitigation and climate regulation. To cut funding that supports the management of these indispensable natural areas feels disregardful of the looming climate crisis we continue to grapple with. It is particularly disappointing to see how this current course of action goes against the stated resiliency and sustainability goals that are outlined in the 2023 PlaNYC report.

The timescales that land management operates on is completely disproportionate to annual fiscal years. To plan for the long term care and restoration of our natural areas is extremely difficult when the threat of losing the funding that supports these projects continues to loom over us. New Yorkers deserve better. They deserve to have high-quality and resilient natural areas in the midst of our urban lives to serve as a sanctuary from the everyday chaos and stress. The NYC Parks staff who continue to dedicate their work towards these natural areas in spite of so much uncertainty deserve better. They deserve to have job security and a clearer outlook on their timeframes.

I stand with my colleagues and New Yorkers in calling for our elected officials to not only restore the funding that provides the jobs of 200 Parks staff, but to also expand natural areas management programs such as the Citywide Trails Program and Parks Equity Initiative. Our city deserves to be livable and resilient, and I trust that our elected officials at every level can see the folly of such a devastating budget cut and can together work to amend this mistake. Thank you.

**Testimony Provided by
[Francine Rogers, Garden Coordinator, Bronx Land Trust]
For the Committee on Parks and Recreation Budget Hearing
on the FY25 NYC Budget**

March 21, 2024

Thank you to Chairman Krishnan and members of the Committee on Parks and Recreation for the opportunity to submit this testimony. My name is Francine Rogers, and I am a member of **Neighborhood Advisory Committee Community Garden** located in the Bronx. We are part of the Bronx Land Trust. Our garden, The Neighborhood Advisory Committee Community Garden, **started in 1983** and has a rich 40-year history of community involvement and has been a vital green space in our South Bronx neighborhood. One of the reasons our garden has been able to survive over these past 40 years of highs and lows is the constant support and guidance from Green Thumb staff along with the much needed resources that they provided such as trees, plants, lumber, tools, and garbage bags, to name just a few items.

As a supporter of the Green Guerillas [Council of Gardeners](#), a dynamic coalition uniting community gardeners across New York City, I want to highlight several crucial recommendations for advancing a sustainable and equitable food system in our city.

Recent 10% NYC budget cuts, particularly to the Department of Parks and Recreation, have severely affected NYC GreenThumb. This essential agency has seen a significant reduction in its budget, hindering its capacity to provide technical assistance, necessary supplies, and adequate staffing, thus impeding its ability to effectively support much needed community gardeners. Therefore, I join their call upon the city to invest in:

- 1. Restoring \$2.6 million in funding for GreenThumb.**
2. Continuing to invest in A Greener NYC to empower local organizations in providing youth with green jobs, infrastructure, and advocacy opportunities to community gardeners.
3. Increase funding to the Get Stuff Clean initiative to enable the DOHMH Rat Academy to address rodent infestation and illegal dumping affecting community gardens, while also strengthening collaboration between DSNY and GreenThumb, and enhancing the relationship and outreach of the Department of Health & Mental Hygiene Rat Academy Training program with community gardeners for effective access to this citywide resource.

Community gardeners have been left to fend for themselves for decades. It is time for the city to invest in its communities and uplift the benefits community gardens contribute to neighborhood success. The budgetary constraints facing NYC Parks's GreenThumb division underscore the urgent need for our platform to focus on protecting and enhancing vital services and initiatives integral to the well-being of our city and its residents.

Francine Rogers
Neighborhood Advisory Committee Community Garden



NEW YORK RESTORATION PROJECT

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New York Restoration Project

Testimony before New York City Council, Committee on Parks and
Recreation Preliminary Budget Hearing 03/21/2024

Good afternoon. Thank you, Chair Krishnan and members of the Committee on Parks and Recreation, for convening this hearing. My name is Lynn Bodnar Kelly, and I am the Executive Director of New York Restoration Project (NYRP), founder and Co-Chair of Parks and Open Space Partners and a founding member of the Play Fair Coalition. I am here today to ensure ALL New Yorkers receive a fully funded parks system by calling for 1% of the City's budget to be committed to Parks.

For nearly 30 years, NYRP has transformed neglected public spaces into thriving community oases. NYRP maintains and programs 52 community gardens across the five boroughs, stewards 80 acres of city parkland, and has built over 350 new green spaces. These spaces provide a haven for residents to grow fresh produce, connect with their neighbors, and relax in nature. Over 1.6 million New Yorkers live within a 10-minute walk of an NYRP green space.

NYC Parks has been operating on an austerity budget for over 40 years. How can we expect an agency that stewards twice the amount of parkland of other major cities including Chicago and Minneapolis to keep our parks safe and clean?

In fact, Chicago and Minneapolis commit between 4 and 5% of their total operating budget to their Parks Department while NYC cannot even manage 1%. New York already is an outlier compared to other large cities. Further disinvestment leaves parks in disrepair, creating further inequality. We can do better, and we will do better.

I join my colleagues today to demand 1% of the city budget for Parks and to ensure that the NYC urban forest is fully funded. These pieces of critical infrastructure save lives, and all New Yorkers deserve equal access to beautiful, high-quality public green space.

Thank you.

New York City Council
FY 2025 Preliminary Budget Hearing
Parks Committee
Thursday, March 21, 2024

Submitted on behalf of:
New York Junior Tennis & Learning (NYJTL)
36-36 33rd Street, Suite 504
Long Island City, NY 11106

Udai Tambar
President and CEO

Presented by
Scott Daly
Senior Director
Community Tennis

Thank you Chair Krishnan and members of the Committee for allowing us to testify today. **New York Junior Tennis & Learning/NYJTL** (legally incorporated and funded as the **New York Junior Tennis League, Inc.**), as the nation's largest tennis and education organization, looks forward to working with all of you on behalf of the youth of our city. For 53 years, with the Council as our partner, NYJTL has been a driving force for New York City's youth and tennis communities, reaching nearly **90,000** youngsters annually throughout the five boroughs.

It is our belief that talent IS universal BUT access and opportunity IS NOT. That is why we have strived over the past 53 years to introduce the sport of tennis to **ALL** children, including those with special needs. NYJTL programs offer the youth of our city much more than the chance just to learn tennis. They have the opportunity to become physically fit; the opportunity to reach new educational heights; and the opportunity to expand their horizons beyond their immediate world. NYJTL helps young people build self-esteem and learn the affirmative values of perseverance, cooperation, fairness and respect.

Traditionally, NYJTL runs the majority of our yearly programming at locations through NYC DOE or NYC Parks. This year, we expect to bring **FREE youth tennis programming to 25 parks** throughout the City as follows:

- **Bronx (3)**
 - Crotona Park
 - St. James Park
 - Williamsbridge Oval

- **Manhattan (2)**
 - Howard Bennett Park
 - Octagon Park

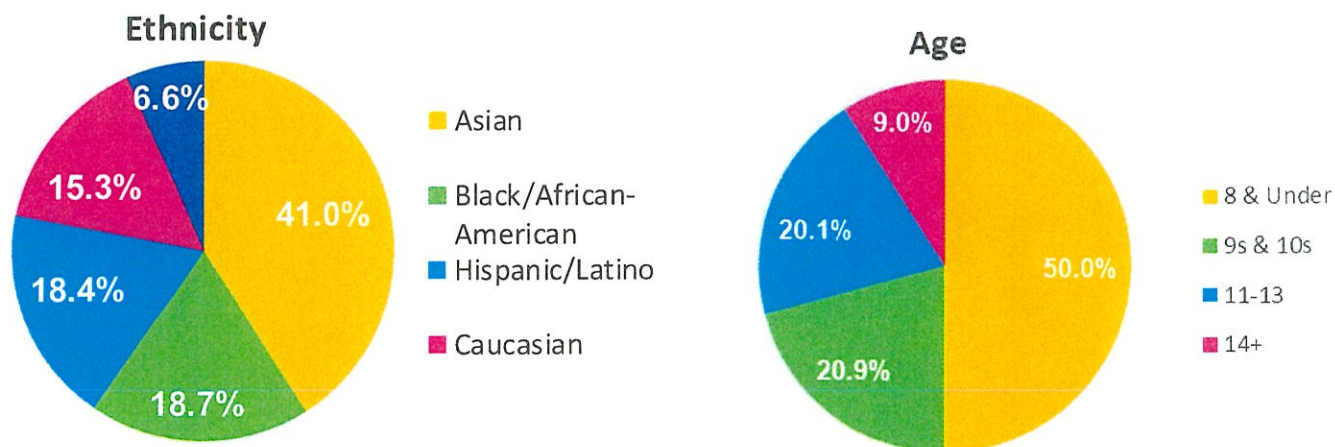
- **Brooklyn (4)**
 - Jackie Robinson Park
 - Linden Park
 - McDonald Playground
 - Andries Playground

- **Queens (13)**
 - Bayswater Park
 - Charles Park
 - Clintonville Playground
 - Cunningham Park
 - Det. Keith Williams Park

- Dutch Kills Playground
 - Forest Park
 - Juniper Valley Park
 - Travers Park
 - Roy Wilkins Park
 - Rochdale Village
 - Russell Sage Playground
 - Telephone Playground
- **Staten Island (3)**
 - Wolfe's Pond
 - Silver Lake Park
 - Fairview Park

The overwhelming majority of the young people we serve are Black, Latino, Asian, and from immigrant communities. **Nearly 70% of our participants are 10 and under with many coming from low-income families and neighborhoods, where young people lack access to the opportunities typically available only to youth in affluent neighborhoods, suburbs and private schools.**

CTP CITYWIDE DEMOGRAPHICS¹



CTP CITYWIDE DEMOGRAPHICS continued¹

Ethnicity	%	Age	%	Gender	%	N/R	%
Asian	41.0%	8 & Under	50%	Male	51.4%	New	67.4%
Black/ African-American	18.7%	9s & 10s	20.9%	Female	48.3%	Returnin	32.6%
Hispanic/Latino	18.4%	11-13	20.1%	Non-binary	0.2%		
Caucasian	15.3%	14 +	9.3%				
Other	6.6%						

¹ - Graph & Pie Charts represents CTP demographics, not the traditional 85,000 youth reached by NYJTL annually including its 30+ DYCD funded SONYC and Compass sites.

Funded under the Council’s *Physical Education and Fitness Initiative*, NYJTL provides quality tennis, educational programming, and character development in EVERY borough throughout the city:

Community Tennis Program (CTP) - Reaches children ages 5-18 throughout all FIVE boroughs year round; Provides trained coaches, tennis instruction, match play, educational services, & special events; Provides FREE tennis equipment and instruction to over 1,000 Special Population/District 75 children during the Summer; Offers educational supports, including FREE SAT Prep & FREE SHSAT Prep, as well as special Tournaments and Events, including trips to the US Open Qualifiers and to Arthur Ashe Kids Day and various pro events and tournaments.

Winter Weekend Indoor Program - Part of CTP - Enables players to continue their progress during this 20-week Indoor Season on Saturdays and/or Sundays; in addition to instruction there are 13 days of FREE tournaments for participants during the two school vacation breaks and the 3-weekend long culminating Hartman Cup tournament.

CTP+ – Located in Brooklyn & Queens, CTP+ is open to NYJTL participants from all five boroughs. The goal of CTP+ is to develop tennis skills of dedicated CTP participants at a higher level. It is designed for players who have demonstrated competitive ability and potential beyond the level of those at their current CTP location. At no cost to players or families, CTP+ provides extended hours of play and a smaller coach to student ratio.

School-Time Tennis Program (STP) - Physical education teachers are trained by NYJTL’s professionally certified coaches on how to incorporate tennis into their school’s curriculum. NYJTL traditionally holds 6 training sessions each school year serving approximately 250 teachers/schools. All teachers and school-based staff are given a tennis curriculum, lesson plans, tennis equipment (rackets & balls) and ongoing onsite support if needed and requested. NYJTL is a NYSED Approved provider of Continuing Teacher & Leader Education (CTLE) credit. Training participants each receive for FREE 6.5 CTLE hours.

Council funding also enables us to employ many of our NYJTL alumni, high school seniors and college students, as coaches and assistant coaches at various times throughout the four seasons (spring, summer, fall and winter).

This year we are seeking **\$1M** under the Council's *Physical Education & Fitness Initiative* – an increase of \$200,000. **If allocated, it would be our first increase in 16 years.** In 2008 our citywide funding was reduced by 1/3 from \$1.2M to \$800,000 in order to fill a Mayoral created budget hole at DOE. Since then:

- The minimum wage in NYC has more than **DOUBLED** from \$7.25 per hour to the current \$15 per hour
- Permit fees and indoor court costs have more than **TRIPLED**
- Equipment costs for nets, racquets and balls have more than **DOUBLED**
- Bus transportation to and from tournaments/special events have more than **TRIPLED**
- COVID-19 protocols have raised operating costs by at least **10%** across the board
- **\$1 today only buys 69% of what it could in 2008**
- **Prices in 2024 are 1.44 times higher than in 2008**

As you know, unlike contracts with DYCD and other agencies, Council discretionary contracts are not (and have never been) eligible for COLA increases. The only way for the Council to address COLA is to enhance funding for its Initiatives. Given the years of rising costs as well as the impact of inflation on the economy, it is becoming increasingly challenging for NYJTL to continue to provide the level of youth tennis programming that it is known for to youth across ALL five boroughs with its current level of Council funding. In order to keep up with these costs and to continue its programming, we URGE the Council to enhance funding for the Physical Education and Fitness Initiative and to fully support our request of \$1M.



New York City Council Committee on Parks
Thursday, March 21, 2024
Committee on Parks and Recreation - Preliminary Budget Hearing
Daniel Papes, Patagonia

Good afternoon, my name is Daniel Papes, and I have been empowered to contribute to this hearing by Patagonia. We are a member of the Play Fair for Parks Coalition, which includes over 400 organizations from across the five boroughs, many of whom will testify today.

Our outdoor spaces create incredible opportunities for young new yorkers, like those involved with organizations like the Laru Beya Surf Collective, to connect with the natural world and lead healthy lifestyles. That our parks budget has grown substantially slower than other frontline agencies is unconscionable. Clean, maintained and accessible parks are a safety issue, too. Mayor Adams has the opportunity to make good on his 1% for NYC Parks promise, while also pursuing his safety goals.

New Yorkers deserve a fully funded, safe, clean, green and resilient parks system. The budget cuts to NYC Parks this year and the proposed budget for next fiscal year jeopardize the very heart of our communities. These cuts will make it even more difficult for the already understaffed, under-resourced Parks Department to carry out the basic work needed to ensure parks are equitable and accessible for all New Yorkers.

Beyond parks, these cuts will hinder the agency's ability to manage its 15 miles of beaches, 51 recreation centers, 65 pools, 9,900 acres of natural areas, 2,300 athletic courts, 800 ballfields, and 1,000 playgrounds. They will inequitably impact the well-being and quality of life of countless individuals and families who cannot escape the bustle of the city as easily as many of us. Parks are an invaluable resource that foster physical and mental health, provide spaces for social interaction, and mitigate the climate crisis.

Thank you,

Daniel Papes
Patagonia



New York City Council Committee on Parks
Thursday, March 21, 2024
Committee on Parks and Recreation - Preliminary Budget Hearing
Patagonia

Good afternoon, my name is Josh and I represent Patagonia. We are a member of the Play Fair for Parks Coalition, which includes over 400 organizations from across the five boroughs, many of whom will testify today. We thank the City Council Committee on Parks Chair Shekar Krishnan for holding this hearing.

New Yorkers deserve a fully funded, safe, clean, green and resilient parks system. The budget cuts to NYC Parks this year and the proposed budget for next fiscal year jeopardize the very heart of our communities. These cuts will make it even more difficult for the already understaffed, under-resourced Parks Department to carry out the basic work needed to ensure parks are equitable and accessible for all New Yorkers.

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- The NYC Parks budget has been cut by 5%, or \$25M, for this fiscal year.
- The FY2025 Preliminary Budget is \$583M, nearly \$55M less than the budget for this fiscal year.
- The hiring freeze and reduced budget will result in nearly 1,000 fewer parks workers, making it impossible for the agency to ensure parks are safe, clean, green, and resilient across the city.
- If enacted, New Yorkers can expect trash strewn parks and playgrounds, delayed activation of sprinklers and water fountains amidst unprecedented summer heat,

- reduced hours and public programming at rec centers, long term bathroom closures, and neglected tree canopy care.
- NYC Parks now has fewer workers than it did before the pandemic despite increased demand and clear need for these spaces, and thousands fewer workers than it had decades ago.
 - NYC Parks is chronically underfunded and understaffed: there are not nearly enough maintenance workers and PEP officers to keep our parks clean and safe.
 - The NYC budget has grown by 127% since 1980, and every other frontline city agency's budget has grown by between 127%-165%, while NYC Parks has only grown by 72%.
 - We demand 1% of the city budget for NYC Parks. Mayor Adams repeatedly committed to this investment but hasn't yet followed through.
 - Parks are critical infrastructure for public health and safety and are drivers of social equity. They should be funded as such.
 - All New Yorkers deserve safe, clean, green and resilient parks, pools, beaches and rec centers.

Whole heartedly,

Joshua McNally
Patagonia Upper West Side



New York City Council Committee on Parks
Thursday, March 21, 2024
Committee on Parks and Recreation - Preliminary Budget Hearing

Good afternoon, my name is Kevin Uehlinger, and I represent Patagonia, Inc. We are a member of the Play Fair for Parks Coalition, which includes over 400 organizations from across the five boroughs, many of whom will testify today. We thank the City Council Committee on Parks Chair Shekar Krishnan for holding this hearing.

New Yorkers deserve a fully funded, safe, clean, green and resilient parks system. The budget cuts to NYC Parks this year and the proposed budget for next fiscal year jeopardize the very heart of our communities. These cuts will make it even more difficult for the already understaffed, under-resourced Parks Department to carry out the basic work needed to ensure parks are equitable and accessible for all New Yorkers.

Beyond parks, these cuts will hinder the agency's ability to manage its 15 miles of beaches, 51 recreation centers, 65 pools, 9,900 acres of natural areas, 2,300 athletic courts, 800 ballfields, and 1,000 playgrounds. They will inequitably impact the well-being and quality of life of countless individuals and families. Parks are an invaluable resource that foster physical and mental health, provide spaces for social interaction, and mitigate the climate crisis.

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 - All New Yorkers deserve safe, clean, green and resilient parks, pools, beaches and rec centers.

Thank you,

Kevin Uehlinger
Patagonia Upper West Side
426 Columbus Ave, New York, NY 10024
kevin.uehlinger@patagonia.com



**New York City Council Committee on Parks
Thursday, March 21, 2024
Committee on Parks and Recreation - Preliminary Budget Hearing
Patagonia | Patagonia Upper West Side**

Good afternoon, my name is **Leticia and** I represent Patagonia/ Great Pacific Iron Works as **Patagonia Upper West Side's Activism Lead. We know how far 1% can go. 1% of our sales go to fund grants for local nonprofits** that work to curb the causes and effects of climate change and environmental social injustice. We know the impact 1% can have on local resources. Securing 1% of the city's budget for Parks is not a huge request; cuts are not on par with the quality of city New York strives to be. New Yorkers deserve a fully funded, safe, clean, green and resilient parking system; New Yorkers deserve better. We are proud members of the Play Fair Coalition and thank the City Council Committee on Parks Chair Shekar Krishnan for holding this hearing.

We demand 1% of the city budget for NYC Parks. Mayor Adams repeatedly committed to this investment but hasn't yet followed through. The NYC budget has grown by 127% since 1980, and every other frontline city agency's budget has grown by between 127%-165%, while NYC Parks has only grown by 72%. This is negligent, irresponsible, and not reflective of a world-class city in the 21st century. How will we successfully manage its 15 miles of beaches, 51 recreation centers, 65 pools, 9,900 acres of natural areas, 2,300 athletic courts, 800 ballfields, and 1,000 playgrounds?

At Patagonia Upper West Side, our core community cause is **Action for Access: Clean water, quality green spaces, and sustainable livelihoods for all New Yorkers.**

Recently, I walked through a garden and sat overlooking the Hudson. The exhaustion that befell my body was overwhelming. Being in nature allowed my body to release built-up tension. Parks are the only immediate, effective, natural, and safe relief for the frequency of this city and rest bit from all the information and tragedy we are bombarded with, daily. Parks are medicine.

Quality Green Spaces:

- NYC Parks now has fewer workers than it did before the pandemic despite increased demand and clear need for these spaces, and thousands fewer workers than it had decades ago. How are we to recover?
- Why did we hire a rat czar if we're creating perfect environments for rat populations to thrive?
- If enacted, New Yorkers can expect trash strewn parks and playgrounds, delayed activation of sprinklers and water fountains amidst unprecedented summer heat, reduced hours and public programming at rec centers, long term bathroom closures, and neglected tree canopy care.

Sustainable Livelihoods for all New Yorkers:

- The budget cuts to NYC Parks this year and the proposed budget for next fiscal year jeopardize the very heart of our communities.

- NYC Parks are chronically underfunded and understaffed: there are not nearly enough maintenance workers and PEP officers to keep our parks clean and safe.
- The hiring freeze and reduced budget will result in nearly 1,000 fewer parks workers, making it impossible for the agency to ensure parks are safe, clean, green, and resilient across the city.
- These cuts will make it even more difficult for the already understaffed, under-resourced Parks Department to carry out the basic work needed to ensure parks are equitable and accessible for all New Yorkers.

What city do you and your families want to live in and experience? To what end was the toil of those who came before us, if not to protect quality green spaces and ensure our residents have sustainable livelihoods?

Thank you,

Leticia de Mello Bueno

Washington Heights/Hudson Heights Resident | Upper West Side worker

Patagonia/ Great Pacific Iron Works



**New York City Council Committee on Parks
Thursday, March 21, 2024
Committee on Parks and Recreation - Preliminary Budget Hearing
Maddy Mayer**

Good afternoon, my name is Maddy Mayer, and I represent Patagonia UWS. We are a member of the Play Fair for Parks Coalition, which includes over 400 organizations from across the five boroughs, many of whom will testify today. We thank the City Council Committee on Parks Chair Shekar Krishnan for holding this hearing.

New Yorkers deserve a fully funded, safe, clean, green and resilient parks system. The budget cuts to NYC Parks this year and the proposed budget for next fiscal year jeopardize the very heart of our communities. These cuts will make it even more difficult for the already understaffed, under-resourced Parks Department to carry out the basic work needed to ensure parks are equitable and accessible for all New Yorkers.

Beyond parks, these cuts will hinder the agency's ability to manage its 15 miles of beaches, 51 recreation centers, 65 pools, 9,900 acres of natural areas, 2,300 athletic courts, 800 ballfields, and 1,000 playgrounds. They will inequitably impact the well-being and quality of life of countless individuals and families. Parks are an invaluable resource that foster physical and mental health, provide spaces for social interaction, and mitigate the climate crisis.

As someone who recently moved to New York City, I often find myself missing the outdoor spaces that my old home had. The parks and beaches feel like a rarity in New York City and if funding continues to be cut, we will lose the few spaces that we have. 1% of the city budget needs to go to our outdoor public spaces. This is critical to support public health both physical and mental for our city. Without our valuable park workers, our public spaces will face a sharp decline in quality, cleanliness, and accessibility. I urge you to properly fund these spaces and support our city. We all deserve access to safe, clean, green and resilient parks, pools, beaches and rec centers.

Thank you,

Maddy Mayer



New York City Council Committee on Parks
Thursday, March 21, 2024
Committee on Parks and Recreation - Preliminary Budget Hearing
Malik Yancey, Patagonia

Good afternoon, my name is **Malik Yancey**, and I represent **Patagonia**. We are a member of the Play Fair for Parks Coalition, which includes over 400 organizations from across the five boroughs, many of whom will testify today. We thank the City Council Committee on Parks Chair Shekar Krishnan for holding this hearing.

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 - Parks are critical infrastructure for public health and safety and are drivers of social equity. They should be funded as such.
 - All New Yorkers deserve safe, clean, green and resilient parks, pools, beaches and rec centers.

Thank you,
Malik Yancey
Patagonia



New York City Council Committee on Parks
Thursday, March 21, 2024
Committee on Parks and Recreation - Preliminary Budget Hearing

Good afternoon, my name is Sarah Seaton-Todd, and I represent Patagonia on the Upper West Side. We are a member of the Play Fair for Parks Coalition, which includes over 400 organizations from across the five boroughs, many of whom will testify today. We thank the City Council Committee on Parks Chair Shekar Krishnan for holding this hearing.

New Yorkers deserve a fully funded, safe, clean, green and resilient parks system. The budget cuts to NYC Parks this year and the proposed budget for next fiscal year jeopardize the very heart of our communities. These cuts will make it even more difficult for the already understaffed, under-resourced Parks Department to carry out the basic work needed to ensure parks are equitable and accessible for all New Yorkers.

Beyond parks, these cuts will hinder the agency's ability to manage its 15 miles of beaches, 51 recreation centers, 65 pools, 9,900 acres of natural areas, 2,300 athletic courts, 800 ballfields, and 1,000 playgrounds. They will inequitably impact the well-being and quality of life of countless individuals and families. Parks are an invaluable resource that foster physical and mental health, provide spaces for social interaction, and mitigate the climate crisis.

- The NYC Parks budget has been cut by 5%, or \$25M, for this fiscal year.
- The FY2025 Preliminary Budget is \$583M, nearly \$55M less than the budget for this fiscal year.
- The hiring freeze and reduced budget will result in nearly 1,000 fewer parks workers, making it impossible for the agency to ensure parks are safe, clean, green, and resilient across the city.
- If enacted, New Yorkers can expect trash strewn parks and playgrounds, delayed activation of sprinklers and water fountains amidst unprecedented summer heat, reduced hours and public programming at rec centers, long term bathroom closures, and neglected tree canopy care.

- NYC Parks now has fewer workers than it did before the pandemic despite increased demand and clear need for these spaces, and thousands fewer workers than it had decades ago.
- NYC Parks is chronically underfunded and understaffed: there are not nearly enough maintenance workers and PEP officers to keep our parks clean and safe.
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Thank you,

Sarah Seaton-Todd
Patagonia Upper West Side



New York City Council Committee on Parks
Thursday, March 21, 2024
Committee on Parks and Recreation - Preliminary Budget Hearing
[Name, Organization or Community Group]

Good afternoon, my name is Scott Nylund, and I represent Patagonia, Great Pacific Iron Works. We are a member of the Play Fair for Parks Coalition, which includes over 400 organizations from across the five boroughs, many of whom will testify today. We thank the City Council Committee on Parks Chair Shekar Krishnan for holding this hearing.

New Yorkers deserve a fully funded, safe, clean, green and resilient parks system. The budget cuts to NYC Parks this year and the proposed budget for next fiscal year jeopardize the very heart of our communities. These cuts will make it even more difficult for the already understaffed, under-resourced Parks Department to carry out the basic work needed to ensure parks are equitable and accessible for all New Yorkers.

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I spend a lot of my private time running or biking along NYC's many paths and trails. These paths need constant maintenance and cleaning, which seems to be slipping. Rats and garbage are growing problems because of the cuts in funding. Without proper funding, our parks will become unsafe, unclean and unusable.

These budget cuts will also affect the safety of park users. Many of our bike paths in are not clearly labeled, causing accidents.

Perhaps taking some of the NYPD budget and putting it towards our parks would help??
Whenever I see NYPD officers, they are either leaning against something while looking through their cellphones, or harrassing houseless folks. Maybe put the NYPD to work picking up rats along the trail? just thinking out loud....

Maintenance to our park spaces needs to get done. Without a proper budget, who is going to do the work?

We demand 1% (or more) for our cities Parks and Natural Areas. We want a fully funded Parks department. Get on it. Thank you!

Thank you,

Scott Nylund

Patagonia



New York City Council Committee on Parks
Thursday, March 21, 2024
Committee on Parks and Recreation - Preliminary Budget Hearing

Good afternoon, my name is Jules and Playfair. We are a member of the Play Fair for Parks Coalition, which includes over 400 organizations from across the five boroughs, many of whom will testify today. We thank the City Council Committee on Parks Chair Shekar Krishnan for holding this hearing.

New Yorkers deserve a fully funded, safe, clean, green and resilient parks system. The budget cuts to NYC Parks this year and the proposed budget for next fiscal year jeopardize the very heart of our communities. These cuts will make it even more difficult for the already understaffed, under-resourced Parks Department to carry out the basic work needed to ensure parks are equitable and accessible for all New Yorkers.

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Thank you,

Jules Isaac
Playfair



New York City Council Committee on Parks
Thursday, March 21, 2024
Committee on Parks and Recreation - Preliminary Budget Hearing
Stephen McCarthy, Play Fair

Good afternoon, my name is Stephen McCarthy, and I represent Play Fair. We are a member of the Play Fair for Parks Coalition, which includes over 400 organizations from across the five boroughs, many of whom will testify today. We thank the City Council Committee on Parks Chair Shekar Krishnan for holding this hearing.

New Yorkers deserve a fully funded, safe, clean, green and resilient parks system. The budget cuts to NYC Parks this year and the proposed budget for next fiscal year jeopardize the very heart of our communities. These cuts will make it even more difficult for the already understaffed, under-resourced Parks Department to carry out the basic work needed to ensure parks are equitable and accessible for all New Yorkers.

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Thank you,

Stephen McCarthy

Play Fair



New York City Council Committee on Parks
Thursday, March 21, 2024
Committee on Parks and Recreation - Preliminary Budget Hearing

Good afternoon, my name is Nathan Hunter and I am writing as a land steward and volunteer with the Bronx Borough Parks Dept. I include myself as a member of the Play Fair for Parks Coalition, which includes over 400 organizations from across the five boroughs, many of whom will testify today. We thank the City Council Committee on Parks Chair Shekar Krishnan for holding this hearing.

New Yorkers deserve a fully funded, safe, clean, green and resilient parks system. The budget cuts to NYC Parks this year and the proposed budget for next fiscal year jeopardize the very heart of our communities. These cuts will make it even more difficult for the already understaffed, under-resourced Parks Department to carry out the basic work needed to ensure parks are equitable and accessible for all New Yorkers.

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- Parks are critical infrastructure for public health and safety and are drivers of social equity. They should be funded as such.
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Its imperative that the Parks Department receives its full funding reinstated and additional funds to be allocated in the budget for its critical care. We haven't seen a reinstated budget since before the 70s and it is beyond time to fund parks properly as additional parkland is created and NYC's population continues to grow. We know parkland is some of the most valued land and we deserve to see it funded as such.

Thank you,

Nathan Hunter

**Testimony of Morgan Monaco, President, Prospect Park Alliance
Parks Committee Budget Hearing
March 21, 2024**

I am Morgan Monaco, President of Prospect Park Alliance, the non-profit organization that operates Prospect Park in partnership with the City. I am here today to support the efforts of the Play Fair campaign to advocate for critical funding for parks in the upcoming budget, including rolling back the 5% budget cut currently in place for NYC Parks and for the City to fulfill the Mayor's campaign promise of 1% of the city budget for parks.

The pandemic made it resoundingly clear that parks and open spaces are essential to the well-being of our communities. Prospect Park is truly "Brooklyn's Backyard," and welcomes more than 10 million visits each year from every zip code in Brooklyn and beyond. In a recent community survey conducted by the Alliance, 82% of respondents cited the park as the key reason they live in their neighborhood, and we are bordered by some of the most diverse neighborhoods in the city, from Little Caribbean in Flatbush to Little Bangladesh in Kensington. Our 585 acres provide fresh air and respite to Brooklyn residents, home to neighborhoods with some of the lowest amounts of green space per resident.

Making Prospect Park a welcoming and accessible space for the diverse communities of Brooklyn is a key part of our mission, and without the support of the City and our elected officials our work would not be possible. Since the pandemic, visitorship to city parks has increased significantly: in Prospect Park we have seen a record number of visitors to the park throughout the year, and the resulting impact in terms of significant wear and tear in the park. At the same time, the City has not kept up with this record use in its funding of parks in the city budget, and Prospect Park Alliance relies on its partnership with the New York City Parks Department for basic maintenance, trash management and general upkeep of Prospect Park.

Parks are essential infrastructure that are critical to our health and well being, and are drivers of social equity. The Citizens Budget Commission recently released a survey on quality of life measures and noted that neighborhood parks are part of what contributes to excellent quality of life for New Yorkers. NYC Parks have been operating with an austerity budget for more than 40 years, with **only 0.5% of the city budget allocated to parks despite the fact that parks comprise 14% of city land**. This chronic underfunding has been devastating to our parks. While we **applaud the City for reinstating the Parks Opportunity Program**, which provides essential frontline maintenance staff, **the current 5% budget cut represents a loss of 900 parks staff and \$55 million in critical funding**, which includes the elimination of the tremendously successful **second shift program** that brought evening maintenance care to the park, as well as further **reductions in Urban Park Rangers and Parks Enforcement Officers**, which is incredibly disheartening considering that currently there are only 2 parks enforcement officers on duty in Central Brooklyn at any one time.

We implore the Council to increase funding for parks in this budget cycle. In addition, we applaud the City Council for recognizing our parks as essential infrastructure by not only restoring current budget cuts, but also by moving beyond a cycle-to-cycle funding model: 1% of our budget must be for parks. Parks saved our city during the pandemic. Now is the time to make sure they get their fair share of the budget.

Testimony of the Randall's Island Park Alliance (RIPA)
to the
New York City Council
FY25 Executive Budget Hearings
March 2024

Good Afternoon Chair Krishnan and members of the Committee on Parks. My name is Deborah Maher and I am President of the Randall's Island Park Alliance (RIPA).

Randall's Island Park is located in the East River between East Harlem, the South Bronx, and Astoria, Queens. RIPA develops, sustains and maintains the Park, provides and facilitates extensive free public programming to all New Yorkers, and serves as a community park to our neighbors in East Harlem and the South Bronx. As the dedicated steward of Randall's Island Park, the Alliance sustains, maintains, develops and programs the Park to support the wellbeing of all New Yorkers.

Since August 2023, over eight (8) acres of public parkland at Randall's Island Park has been occupied by a Humanitarian Emergency Response and Relief Center (HERRC) to house ~3,000 migrants. The facility is built on four (4) highly used athletic fields that served thousands of NYC children each season.

The fields were the most accessible and among the most popular fields at the park - representing 350,000 sq feet of opportunity for children all in need of a safe and open place to play. An estimated *8,000 playing hours will be lost this spring/summer as the City has extended the facility till August of 2024*. Behind every lost permit hour are *hundreds of NYC kids missing out on the opportunity* to be outside and play sports together.

In addition to the loss of field space, the facility has brought other challenges. Located at the park's most popular access point from Manhattan, the 103rd Street Footbridge, the facility has resulted in *illegal mopeds speeding across the bridge, park pathways and even playing fields* as well as into our neighboring community of East Harlem, putting pedestrians at risk. Precious picnic areas and passive parkland for recreational use, are no longer available. Furthermore, with limited City resources for the HERRC, *park security and maintenance have been compromised due to violent crimes, illegal vending, littering, and camping*.

We empathize that the City is facing a crisis, but the use of NYC public parkland for this purpose is not the answer. We have heard many supportive words from City government about the shared value of parks. We need to see that value reflected in a budget commitment and the **proper use** of Park Space. Furthermore, we believe that the City failed to properly follow the legislative process to site the HERRC facility. New York courts have been clear that legislative authority is required for non-park use purposes. In the case of the Randall's Island HERRC the City did not go through the steps to get legislative approval.

It is imperative that the City Council advocate for increased funding for NYC Parks (at least 1% of the city budget) as well as proper use of park land in New York City. The use of Randall's Island Park, or any park, in this way, is not in the best interest of park patrons, local communities, or the migrants. It is not sustainable, nor is it safe or equitable, and the situation must change *now*.

Thank you for your time.



New York City Council Committee on Parks

Thursday March 21, 2024

Committee on Parks and Recreation – Preliminary Budget Hearing

When parks thrive, people prosper. However, for such prosperity to occur, New Yorkers require a fully funded, safe, clean, green and resilient park system. Maintenance workers, gardeners, urban parks rangers and parks enforcement patrol are the ones on the frontline helping to make this happen. Seven days a week, 365 days a year, they show up to protect, maintain, and keep safe our parks, playgrounds, and recreation centers. In Red Hook, they oversee and care for Coffey Park, Valentino Pier, Bush Clinton playground, ball fields and soccer fields, and approximately 40 other green spaces in District 6. They are committed and they are loyal.

Budget cuts to the NYC Parks this year and the proposed budget for the next fiscal year harms the gains we've made in our Red Hook parks and recreation center thereby ensuring stagnation or roll back of the cleanliness, maintenance, and program offerings of these neighborhood assets. Currently, at Valentino Pier, part of the pier is collapsing, and Parks lacks the funds to address this unsafe condition. Following up on the 5% or \$25M budget cut with a proposed \$55M cut for this fiscal year will lead to further lack of repairs for Parks which has been historically underfunded by the city.

Red Hook Conservancy has been stewarding parks in the community of Red Hook Brooklyn for almost 12 years and is committed to creating vibrant parks and recreational spaces in the community. This is why we and volunteers from the community and throughout the city come out regularly to clean, rake, paint, plant, care for street trees, and support our recreation centers. If we are giving of our free time to ensure our parks and recreational spaces remain beautiful, accessible, and safe, why can't the City and Mayor Adams do the same. It is not our words that matter but our actions. Our volunteer work follow our words and mission, it's time for city officials and the mayor to commit to the promise he made to fund the Department of Parks at 1% of the city budget. Nothing less is acceptable.

Sincerely,

Marlene Pantin
Executive Director

Good afternoon, my name is Merritt Birnbaum, and I am the President and CEO of Riverside Park Conservancy. We are one of over 400 organizations that belong to the Play Fair Coalition. Thank you to Parks Committee Chair Shekar Krishnan for holding this hearing and for his tireless advocacy to tackle the crisis facing our parks.

Riverside Park Conservancy works through an agreement with NYC Parks to help the City care for 450 acres spread across five parks, along 6 miles of waterfront in upper Manhattan from West 59th Street to West 181st Street.

We are fortunate to have built a 35-year history that leverages thousands of hours of volunteer time and significant funding to supplement the City's dwindling workforce. We recognize that the vast majority of parks in our city do not have the benefit of Conservancy groups. Our situation only underscores how dire the current crisis is for parks in our most vulnerable communities.

Make no mistake: our parks are in crisis. We see it every day in Riverside, Fort Washington, West Harlem Piers, and Sakura as we struggle to keep these parks clean, safe and green.

In June 2008, our district had approximately 79 CPWs or City Parks Workers. This June, we will be lucky if we have 20 of them. CPWs do everything – from picking up trash, to cleaning bathrooms, to removing graffiti. They are the frontline of the Parks Department, and in our park alone, their ranks have fallen to 25% of what they were 16 years ago.

In smaller parks around the City, this type of deficit means we're not talking about 1 worker per park -- we're talking about **a fraction of 1 worker** per park.

How can we accept this? Parks are critical infrastructure, and they need to be funded the same way we fund roads, bridges, police, sanitation and hospitals.

In the last five decades, New York City has built 200 new parks. How can our city pride itself on building new parks and not dedicate the resources we need to maintain them?

In 1970, NYC Parks headcount was 11,000. Forty-five years later, and we are looking at a headcount of only 7,000.

A simple math question: How can we have 200 more parks today and 4,000 fewer Parks workers?

How can our government say it prioritizes sanitation and safety and not consider the public parks that occupy 14% of our city's surface area as needing those funds?

Just this past Sunday in our park, NYC Parks staff who were slated for spring landscape work were pulled away to paint over an incidence of major offensive graffiti in a high-traffic location. They dropped what they were doing and pivoted, because that is what CPWs do – they respond to needs on the ground and they get the work done.

- If we want bathrooms open and clean, we need staff.
- If we want lawns that are green and not filled with rotting trash, we need staff.
- If we want stairs and pathways that are clear of safety hazards, we need staff.
- If we want healthy trees and plants, we need staff.

Our parks are a direct reflection of our City's commitment to the health and happiness of its residents. We demand that the City fulfil its promise and deliver 1% of our budget to parks. This is a rounding error for you, and a lifeline for all of us.



New York City Council

Committee on Parks

Thursday, March 21, 2024

Committee on Parks and Recreation - Preliminary Budget Hearing
Sara Roosevelt Park Community Coalition

"When parks are unattended, they are targets"
- former Parks Commissioner Henry J. Stern

Good afternoon, my name is K Webster, and I represent Sara Roosevelt Park Community Coalition (SRPCC).

We thank the City Council Committee on Parks Chair Shekar Krishnan for holding this hearing.

SRPCC is composed of local neighborhood volunteers, residents, small businesses, and city-wide organizations. Among our collaborations and partnerships of over four decades: University Settlement, FABnyc, GreenMap System, Pratt, Eldridge Street Synagogue, The Hort, AAFE, the Gardens: M'Finda, Hua Mei, Rivington House, AudubonNY, Homelessness Memorial Betty Hubbard, NYCHA Housing, Remote Theater Project, our local High Schools and Middle Schools, City Relief, Chinatown Partnership, Playground NYC, BRC Senior Center, CPC, Tenement Museum, Mount Sinai, 5th Precinct Police Department's Youth Explorers, Boy Scouts, Bkind, Bowery Football Club and playoui.org. And many more. Our volunteer, expert gardeners work closely with our Parks Department Park Manager Jamil Phillips and his staff - we have no Parks' gardeners.

We are a member of the Play Fair for Parks Coalition, which includes over 400 organizations from across the five boroughs, many of whom will testify today.

We thank Adam Ganser and his staff for their tireless efforts fighting for common sense funding for *all* NYC parks.

The budget cuts to NYC Parks this year and the proposed budget for next fiscal year jeopardize the very heart of our communities.

Our Coalition *IS* our community, a community that relies on this park to be our democratic meeting places – where any differences are put aside to play soccer, see a play, go to the senior center, build a garden, join other parents and children in the playgrounds, build a Sukkah, celebrate Juneteenth, hold lanterns for the Moon Festival, gather Asians and allies for ROAR festivals, create a Halloween-scape,

join our local representatives to give advice on tenant displacement, see a nine-foot 'walking Amal' puppet, honor our diverse communities past and present, offer kindness and a cup of hot cocoa to take the edge of homelessness, join forces with our representatives for park infrastructure funding, write grants for solely for this park, gather input on upcoming park changes, and much more.

Cuts will make it even *more* difficult for the already understaffed, under-resourced Parks Department to carry out the basic work needed to ensure parks are equitable and accessible for all New Yorkers.

- The NYC Parks budget has been cut by 5%, or \$25M, for this fiscal year.
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- The NYC budget has grown by 127% since 1980, and every other frontline city agency's budget has grown by between 127%-165%, while NYC Parks has only grown by 72%.
- We demand 1% of the city budget for NYC Parks. Mayor Adams repeatedly committed to this investment but hasn't yet followed through.
- Parks are critical infrastructure for public health and safety and are drivers of social equity – fund them!
- All New Yorkers deserve safe, clean, green and resilient parks, pools, beaches and rec centers.

Climate mitigation won't wait.

Beyond parks, these cuts will hinder the agency's ability to manage its beaches, rec centers, pools, acres of natural areas, athletic courts, ballfields, and playgrounds. They will inequitably impact the well-being and quality of life of countless individuals and families.

In a 1994 article: "Trying New Ways to Save Decaying Parks – we see a budget much like this one. Warnings of what an austerity budget does went unheeded:

"The city has in effect announced that is not going to take care of its parks" ED of Parks Council
"Critics worry that the districts would create a two-tier system of parks."
"Further budget cuts are like "giving liposuction to a skeleton"- Com Henry J. Stern

Thank you,
K Webster

President
Sara Roosevelt Park Community Coalition
Website <http://sdrpc.mkgarden.org/>
Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/StantonBldg>
Twitter @SaraRPCC
Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/sararooseveltparkcc/>

Testimony Provided by Michelle Arvin, volunteer at Smiling Hogshead Ranch
For the Committee on Parks and Recreation Budget Hearing
on the FY25 NYC Budget
March 21, 2024

Thank you to Chairman Krishnan and members of the Committee on Parks and Recreation for the opportunity to submit this testimony. My name is Michelle Arvin, and I am a member of Smiling Hogshead Ranch located in Queens. Our garden, SHR, has a rich history of community involvement and has been a vital green space in our neighborhood. We just celebrated the 14th anniversary of our founding.

Recent 10% NYC budget cuts, particularly to the Department of Parks and Recreation, have severely affected NYC GreenThumb. This essential agency has seen a significant reduction in its budget, hindering its capacity to provide technical assistance, necessary supplies, and adequate staffing, thus impeding its ability to effectively support community gardeners. Therefore, we call upon the city to invest in:

1. Increasing funding to the Parks Equity Initiative (PEI) and allocating \$300,000 of PEI funds to create a pilot program empowering garden groups to access funds directly, through a simplified application and reporting process, fostering equity and sustainability.
2. Continuing to invest in A Greener NYC to empower local organizations in providing youth with green jobs, infrastructure, and advocacy opportunities to community gardeners.
3. Increase funding to the Get Stuff Clean initiative to enable the DOHMH Rat Academy to address rodent infestation and illegal dumping affecting community gardens, while also strengthening collaboration between DSNY and GreenThumb, and enhancing the relationship and outreach of the Department of Health & Mental Hygiene Rat Academy Training program with community gardeners for effective access to this citywide resource.
4. Restore \$2.6 million in funding for GreenThumb.
5. We support the [Play Fair Coalition](#) in asking for the Mayor to dedicate 1% of the NYC Fiscal Budget to the Department of Parks and Recreation.

Community gardeners have been left to fend for themselves for decades. It is time for the city to invest in its communities and uplift the benefits community gardens contribute to neighborhood success. The budgetary constraints facing NYC Parks's GreenThumb division underscore the urgent need for our platform to focus on protecting and enhancing vital services and initiatives integral to the well-being of our city and its residents.

Michelle Arvin
Smiling Hogshead Ranch



New York City Council Committee on Parks

Thursday, March 21, 2024

Committee on Parks and Recreation - Preliminary Budget Hearing

The Bronx River Foodway Team

Good afternoon, my name is Jah Mars and Lashette Williams. We represent the Bronx River Foodway Team, an advocacy team for the Bronx River Foodway, NYC Parks' first edible food forest on city owned land. Together we help steward and activate this community asset as well as Concrete Plant Park, a NYC Parks property.

We are also a proud member of the Play Fair for Parks Coalition which includes over 400 organizations from across the five boroughs. We thank the City Council Committee on Parks Chair Shekar Krishnan for holding this hearing.

New Yorkers deserve a fully funded, safe, clean, green and resilient Parks system. The budget cuts to NYC Parks this year and the proposed budget for the next fiscal year jeopardize the very heart of our communities. These cuts will make it even more difficult for the already understaffed, under-resourced Parks Department to carry out the basic work needed to ensure parks are equitable and accessible for all New Yorkers.

Parks are an invaluable resource that foster physical and mental health, provide spaces for social interaction, and mitigate the climate crisis. But, if they are enacted, the cuts will hinder more than the parks, the urban green spaces that provide respite to each community. They will have a negative effect on the agency's ability to manage its 15 miles of beaches, 51 recreation centers, 65 pools, 9,900 acres of natural areas, 2,300 athletic courts, 800 ballfields, and 1,000 playgrounds. The outcome will have an inequitable impact on the well-being and quality of life of countless individuals and families. Parks are an invaluable resource that foster physical and mental health, provide spaces for social interaction, and mitigate the climate crisis.

The Bronx River Foodway is located inside Concrete Plant Park in the South Bronx. We rely on a safe and clean park to host community programs that connect people with the land. We examine how a sustainable food landscape can be integrated into a public park and teach community members to think about new ways to use land within the city. Just last year, we had to host more than 15 stewardship events to help combat litter and garbage inside the park. These were in addition to over 30 programs or activities that improved community members' access to food, space for mental health, and opportunities to connect with others community members. This marks a ratio of 1 cleanup event for every 2 mission-driven activity.

The NYC Parks budget has been cut by 5%, or \$25M, for this fiscal year, and the FY2025 Preliminary Budget is \$583M, nearly \$55M less than the budget for this fiscal year. For the

Foodway, this means a reduction in parks personnel that can keep the Foodway a healthy and safe space for children and families to play. This could mean countless hypodermic needles, broken glass, or condoms, being left on paths in the park for the community to deal with. This does not make for a safer and more resilient community.

NYC Parks has been chronically underfunded and understaffed for years: there are not nearly enough maintenance workers and PEP officers to keep our parks clean and safe. If the proposed cuts are enacted, New Yorkers can expect trash strewn parks and playgrounds, delayed activation of sprinklers and water fountains amidst unprecedented summer heat, reduced hours and public programming at rec centers, long term bathroom closures, and neglected tree canopy care. It will take years to recover from the ongoing effects of this neglect, as we know from experience.

The NYC budget has grown by 127% since 1980, and every other frontline city agency's budget has grown by between 127%-165%, while NYC Parks has only grown by 72%. We call on the City Council Committee on Parks to ensure NYC Parks and Recreations Dept. receive full operational funding. We demand 1% of the city budget for NYC Parks. Mayor Adams repeatedly committed to this investment but has not yet followed through. Parks are critical infrastructure for public health and safety and are drivers of social equity, and they should be funded as such.

Thank you,
Jah Mars and Lashette Williams
Bronx River Foodway Team Co-Chairs

New York City Council Committee on Parks
Thursday, March 21, 2024
Committee on Parks and Recreation - Preliminary Budget Hearing
The Bronx River Foodway Team

Good Evening, my name is Joan Bennerson and I represent the Foodway Team. And as a member of the Play Fair for Parks Coalition which includes over 200 + organizations from across the five boroughs. I want to thank the City Council Committee on Parks Chair Shekar Krishnan for the opportunity to be heard.

I am a New Yorker, born and bred, and like hundreds of other New Yorkers That Love the park, we deserve a fully funded, safe, clean, green and resilient park system. The budget cuts to NYC Parks this year and the proposed budget for next fiscal year jeopardize the very heart of our communities. These cuts will make it even more difficult for the already understaffed, under-resourced Parks Department to carry out the basic work needed to ensure parks are equitable and accessible for all New Yorkers.

The Bronx River Foodway inside Concrete Plant Park in the South Bronx, hosts several events throughout the year, where we help the community connect with the land. We examine how a sustainable food landscape can be integrated into a public park and teach community members to think about new ways to use land within the city. Our city parks provide a space where all New Yorkers can go and just be at peace to smell the grass or take a walk, learn about the Foodway and participate in park events/or workshops.

NYC Parks are severely underfunded and understaffed, there are not nearly enough maintenance workers and PEP officers to keep our parks clean and safe. If the cuts are enacted, New Yorkers can expect MORE trash strewn parks and playgrounds, delayed activation of sprinklers and water fountains amidst unprecedented summer heat, reduced hours and public programming at rec centers, long term bathroom closures, and neglected tree canopy care. Parks are crucial for public health, clean water, Plants, pollinators, birds, bees, green infrastructure, everyone, everyone. The parks are for everyone, think of it like, you're the Lorax and now is the time to speak for the trees.

Thank you
Joan Bennerson



**New York City Council Committee on Parks
Thursday, March 21, 2024
Committee on Parks and Recreation - Preliminary Budget Hearing
Friends of Astoria Heights Park**

Good afternoon, my name is **Lynn Kennedy**, and I represent **The Friends of Astoria Heights Park**. We are a member of the Play Fair for Parks Coalition, which includes over 400 organizations from across the five boroughs, many of whom will testify today. We thank the City Council Committee on Parks Chair Shekar Krishnan for holding this hearing.

New Yorkers deserve a fully funded, safe, clean, green and resilient parks system. The budget cuts to NYC Parks this year and the proposed budget for next fiscal year jeopardize the very heart of our communities. These cuts will make it even more difficult for the already understaffed, under-resourced Parks Department to carry out the basic work needed to ensure parks are equitable and accessible for all New Yorkers.

Beyond parks, these cuts will hinder the agency's ability to manage its 15 miles of beaches, 51 recreation centers, 65 pools, 9,900 acres of natural areas, 2,300 athletic courts, 800 ballfields, and 1,000 playgrounds. They will inequitably impact the well-being and quality of life of countless individuals and families. Parks are an invaluable resource that foster physical and mental health, provide spaces for social interaction, and mitigate the climate crisis.

My name is Lynn Kennedy and I am the cofounder of The Friends of Astoria Heights Park, which is a group of volunteers from the neighborhood surrounding the park located at 46th Street and 30th Rd. in Astoria and adjacent to IS 10 Middle School. Our group has been in existence since 2013 when we began advocating with our electeds for a safer and more beautiful park space. We are the recipients of funding that allowed for a renovation of the park space and reopened in May 2018. We received \$2.2 million on behalf of Mayor de Blasio through the Community Parks Initiative and Parks without Borders programs, \$1.5 Million from the

Department of Environmental Protection, \$1.1 million from Councilmember Costantinides and \$1 million from Borough President Melinda Katz to make this project possible.

The park remains as heavily utilized as ever in our densely populated neighborhood, and since COVID even more so as it serves as a hub for many to relax, exercise, socialize, serving as a small and yet vital green oasis in an otherwise cemented urban environment. Recently with less staffing and oversight, we have seen more litter, more dogs, broken equipment and vandalism. The positives of having had funding for our park have meant more programming for our youth, clean areas to sit and walk, maintained and safer bathrooms, and an increased positive moral from having park's department support and safety. We cannot afford to lose any park space especially in our district, which falls short of the citywide average of green acreage. We also cannot afford to let parks lapse into another 25–30-year cycle of neglect as is what had happened prior to the Friends' group advocacy in 2013.

I would like to highlight some data points:

The NYC Parks budget has been cut by 5%, or \$25M, for this fiscal year. The hiring freeze and reduced budget will result in nearly 1,000 fewer parks workers, making it impossible for the agency to ensure parks are safe, clean, green, and resilient across the city. If enacted, New Yorkers can expect trash strewn parks and playgrounds, delayed activation of sprinklers and water fountains amidst unprecedented summer heat, reduced hours and public programming at rec centers, long term bathroom closures, and neglected tree canopy care. NYC Parks is chronically underfunded and understaffed and there are not nearly enough maintenance workers and PEP officers to keep our parks clean and safe.

The friends of Astoria Heights join with others in demanding the mayor hold true to his promise of 1% of the city budget for NYC Parks. Mayor Adams has repeatedly committed to this investment but hasn't yet followed through. All New Yorkers deserve to have this critical city infrastructure supported and maintained. Parks are critical infrastructure for public health and safety and are drivers of social equity. They should be funded as such.

Thank you,

Lynn Kennedy

Friends of Astoria Heights Park

TESTIMONY: UJA-FEDERATION OF NEW YORK

New York City Council Budget and Oversight Hearings on the Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2025

**New York City Council Committee on Parks and Recreation
Honorable Shekar Krishnan, Chair**

**Submitted by:
Faith Behum, UJA-Federation of New York**

March 21, 2024

Thank you, Chairperson Krishnan and members of the Committee on Parks and Recreation for holding this hearing and for the opportunity to submit testimony. My name is Faith Behum, and I am a Senior Advocacy and Policy Advisor at UJA-Federation of New York.

Established more than 100 years ago, UJA-Federation of New York is one of the nation's largest local philanthropies. Central to UJA's mission is to care for those in need—identifying and meeting the needs of New Yorkers of all backgrounds and Jews everywhere. UJA supports an expansive network of nearly 100 nonprofit organizations serving those that are most vulnerable and in need of programs and services and allocates over \$180 million each year to combat poverty and food insecurity, nurture mental health and well-being, counter antisemitism and strengthen Jewish life, and respond to crises here and across the globe.

Many of the nonprofits in UJA's network have pools in their facilities. Those with indoor pools offer private and group swim lessons as well as opportunities for children, youth and adults to engage in other aquatic activities throughout the year. Those who have outdoor pools are usually located at camps and use these spaces to host swim lessons and aquatic activities for their camp participants. In a few instances, when they do not have access to their own indoor or outdoor pool, some nonprofits use New York City pools for swimming lessons and water activities for their campers.

To maintain the services that nonprofits provide at pools, they require skilled and reliable lifeguards to ensure the safety of their participants. In the case of the nonprofits who partner with New York City pools, they also require access to NYC pools as well as an adequate number of lifeguards. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, many of the nonprofits in UJA's network struggle to hire and maintain the number of lifeguards needed to staff their pools. This becomes increasingly difficult when the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYCDPR) increases wages for lifeguards at their facilities. Many lifeguards leave nonprofits to work at New York City funded positions. Nonprofits are unable to compete with the higher wages offered at the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation pools and beaches and are left scrambling to find lifeguards to staff their swimming programs.

For the last few summers, one nonprofit in UJA's network who partners with the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation to use a city funded pool for their summer camp, struggled to gain access to the facility. NYCDPR cited lack of lifeguards and denied the nonprofit usage of their pool. The nonprofit had their own

lifeguards they were prepared to use at the city's facility but were told they could not use them due to issues with the lifeguard union. They were unable to use the city's pool and were forced to rent pool space elsewhere, which proved to be costly and inconvenient, campers had to be transported twenty minutes each way to get to the pool. They also were only able to rent the pool three mornings a week, meaning most campers only accessed water two times a week. The limited availability of swimming at the camp caused by lack of lifeguards originally and later inability to access the city's pool caused many campers to drop out of the program. This has resulted in the program losing hundreds of campers over the last three years.

Lack of access to pools and limited availability of lifeguards create a barrier to teaching people how to swim. The nonprofits in UJA's network are committed to providing swim lessons and water safety instruction to the communities they serve. In many instances, if these nonprofits did not offer this resource their communities would lose access to this life saving skill. UJA joined the New York City Interorganizational Task Force on Lifeguarding and Aquatics in 2022 to partner with city agencies and local nonprofits to better understand why there is a lifeguard shortage and what can be done to address it. It soon became clear that to create a lifeguard pipeline, the Taskforce needed to broaden their focus by locating ways to increase access to swim and water safety training, as well as supporting nonprofits and municipal partners in building capacity. In many instances, access to swim lessons and water safety instruction is only available to those who can afford the classes and/or are fortunate enough to have access to a pool in their community.

In an effort to prepare all New Yorkers, children & adults, to be safe around the water and address the lifeguard shortage, UJA with the New York City Interorganizational Task Force on Lifeguarding and Aquatics would like to propose that the City of New York create a citywide aquatics initiative.

The lack of broadly accessible swim instruction and sufficient lifeguards to staff beaches and pools, has created an urgent public health crisis. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), more children in the United States, ages 1–4, die from drowning than any other cause of death. And for children ages 5–14, drowning is the second leading cause of unintentional injury or death. This entirely avoidable public safety hazard has an outsize impact on communities of color. The CDC also reports that, on average, the drowning death rate among the Black community is 1.5 times that of the white population. As the lifeguard shortage continues to result in decreased access to swimming education programs, the racial disparities in drownings and water accidents are likely to continue to increase.

A challenge of this significance cannot be fully addressed by a single entity or solution. To achieve meaningful change, a multifaceted approach that meets people where they are and removes barriers to access is needed. As a first step, **UJA supports the proposal of the New York City Interorganizational Task Force on Lifeguarding and Aquatics to create a \$5 million fund for nonprofits to provide access to four categories of programming:**

1. Land-based water safety education which consists of a multi-week set of classes that focus on water safety.
2. "Second Grade" Swim- A partnership between nonprofits and the NYC Department of Education that brings students (2nd grade or similar age) to schools with pools for multi-week swim safety classes.
3. Swim Lessons- Free city funded swim lessons provided to New York City youth & adults overseen by community-based organizations in all five boroughs.
4. Lifeguard Training and Certification: Free lifeguard training and nationally recognized certification programs provided across all five boroughs. Free lifeguard development programs provided across all five boroughs to create a robust pipeline of youth prepared to undertake lifeguard training and certification.

This aquatics initiative is both a lifesaving skills program and a workforce development program. In addition to stand alone programming, the four aquatics programs listed above can seamlessly push into existing youth programs managed by both the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development and the New York City Department of Education. UJA urges the city to also consider beginning with pilot programs during

this fiscal year at programs including but not limited to: 3-K/Pre-K, Saturday Night Lights, Beacons and Cornerstones.

To truly improve water safety at city pools and beaches, swim and water safety instruction must be made available to every resident in the city. New York City does not have enough pools to accomplish this. Nonprofits must be partnered with and funded adequately, particularly in poorer, under-resourced areas to increase the number of people accessing these life-saving lessons. The city already partners with nonprofits to provide a vast array of services to New York City residents. Nonprofits with pools have the infrastructure in place and connections to their local communities to support the city's efforts in improving water safety for its residents.

Lastly, when nonprofits rely on New York City pools to offer swim lessons, water safety instruction or other aquatic activities to their community members, NYCDPR must work with nonprofits to continue to allow them to use this resource. In the case of summer camps, nonprofits must be notified as soon as possible if NYCDPR will not be granting access to their pools, so they have enough time to look for other options for their campers. UJA also urges the city to work with the lifeguard union to understand and correct any obstacles that may be in place for nonprofits to use their own, non-city funded lifeguard staff at New York City pools.

Conclusion

Improving water safety across New York City and increasing and maintaining enough lifeguards at beaches and pools are issues that will require both city agencies and nonprofits to work together to address effectively. Thank you for your time and if you have any questions about the recommendations in the testimony, please contact me at behumf@ujafedny.org.



::TESTIMONY TO THE NYC COUNCIL PARKS COMMITTEE::

Budget Hearing | Thursday, March 21, 2024

Thank you, Hon. Chair Krishnan, and members of the NYC Council Parks & Recreation Committee. My name is Sally Burns, and I am the Planning Associate for the Union Square Partnership. We are the nonprofit business improvement district working to create a clean, safe, vibrant, and enjoyable neighborhood for Union Square's residents, businesses, and visitors. At our neighborhood's core is Union Square Park, where we provide stewardship and supplemental services, including cleaning, trash collection, landscaping, and free public programming.

Union Square Park is a critical open space amenity for our neighborhood and an important civic gathering place for the entire city. It is not only a green oasis in a bustling mixed-use district, but a site for free expression, and the chosen venue for hundreds of demonstrations, performances, and public events each year, as well as the City's flagship Greenmarket, operating four days a week.

Due to this intensive use, the infrastructure beneath our beautiful park is aging and failing. It has been nearly 40 years since the park's interior was renovated, and the result is deteriorating plumbing and drainage systems that have caused sinkholes and eroding pathways. With failing irrigation, the park plantings rely on makeshift and expensive workarounds that have caused the landscaping to deteriorate. The current conditions in the park are not only a detriment to plant and tree health but create unsafe conditions for pedestrians. Furthermore, this park is located above the fourth busiest subway station in NYC. Rather than waiting for a disaster when water pipes break, we are calling for our city leaders to be proactive and fund these repairs before it is too late.

We are here today to advocate for funding to repair Union Square Park's plumbing and drainage systems and pathway reconstruction. We are asking the Council and the City to fund the full \$8.9M requested by the Parks Department to complete this project.

We have received a letter of support for this project from Manhattan Community Board 5 and would like to thank Councilmember Rivera, Councilmember Bottcher, Councilmember Powers, Chair Krishnan, and Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine's staff for taking the time to meet about this important project. Our parks are essential public spaces for our city's health and sustainability, and so we urge the council and the City to ensure that funding is secured for the Parks Department in FY25 and beyond, including the 1% called for partners like New Yorkers for Parks and the Trust for Public Land. We look forward to the Council's support and to working with NYC Parks Commissioner Sue Donoghue on this effort.

Thank you.

Dear NYC Council Members,

I am submitting this written statement as, due to work commitments, I could not attend the March 21, 2024 hearing hosted by the Parks and Environment Committee.

I am a founding member of the West 80s Neighborhood Association (an all-volunteer nonprofit community group). We helped co-found a larger coalition group entitled "Love Your Street Tree Day". Under both organizations' auspices we have been hosting large community events for over ten years in order to bring awareness to the importance of NYC's street trees and the need for more maintenance and care of those street trees. After the Million Trees Initiative (started under Mayor Bloomberg and completed under Mayor DeBlasio) we saw too many beautiful young trees perish after being planted because proper maintenance and care were not implemented. We also felt that there was a need to educate the community about how and why we should steward these amazing trees - both the newly planted ones and older ones as well. Our events have been very successful over the years, attracting over 100 attendees each time.

Please see our websites below for more information.

We were thrilled when The Nature Conservancy of NY created an even larger umbrella organization - The Urban Forest Task Force - and invited us to join. They have produced amazing materials on this issue (see their publications the "NYC Urban Forest Agenda" and "The State of the Urban Forest in NYC"). Now we are called the Forest For All NYC Coalition. We support the goals and requests delineated in those publications and given our volunteer community projects, we especially urge the increase and equitable distribution of funding for not only planting but also maintenance of the urban forest - especially our street trees! We applaud NYC's commitment to a 30% tree canopy cover, and the recent legislation passed that mandates NYC considers the role of trees/ tree canopy in all long-term sustainability planning. However, any financial cuts to the NYC Parks funding in the FY25 budget would counter those goals! We also urge full funding of the parks budget so that we may maintain and increase "green" jobs for New Yorkers, and keep our green spaces clean and safe in every neighborhood.

Green spaces are a necessity in this concrete and glass city; our urban parks (whether large or small) improve the air quality in our city; help reduce our stress levels; provide opportunities to exercise without the cost of a pricey gym membership; teach urban children the importance and benefits of nature; and protect necessary wildlife (including our beneficial pollinators: birds, butterflies, and bees). We saw and experienced how much our green spaces were a necessity, not a luxury, during Covid.

We must not go backwards as we have been making so much progress towards a greener and cleaner city.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this statement. Please forward it to the appropriate City Council Members.

Best,
Melissa

Melissa Elstein, Secretary & Co-founder
West 80s Neighborhood Association
P.O. Box 732
NY, NY 10024

www.west80s.org

www.loveyourstreetreeday.com

Parks Committee Hearing Written Testimony
March 21, 2024
Anita Chan

My name is Anita Chan, I am a lifelong New Yorker and a huge fan and user of NYC parks and green spaces. I urge the city council to ensure that Mayor Adam's recent PEGS are reversed and funding is restored to our city's beloved and vital parks. The proposed FY25 budget would cut \$55 million dollars from NYC Parks (in comparison to the prior year) and hundreds of essential green jobs, which threaten the health and resilience of New York City.

In addition, I ask for your support in helping Big Reuse, an environmental nonprofit that collects and processes food scraps, conducts community outreach, and provides environmental education opportunities, to keep their processing site on NYC Parks land under the Queensboro Bridge. Last year alone, they composted over 2.3 million pounds of food scraps and yard waste. The local processing of organic waste into compost is crucial in the city's sustainability and waste reduction goals. What is further devastating to know is that the space will be used for parking while the Queensbridge "Baby" Park undergoes renovation. It is ridiculous to displace a vital asset to the community and the environment for parking space that is plentiful around the area. The eviction also ignores the voices of numerous neighborhood residents, council members, and the Queens Borough President, who have all advocated for the preservation of the site.

Let's ensure that parks have the financial support they need and that they are going the right direction in prioritizing the preservation of green spaces, green jobs while promoting environmental responsibility including preserving community composting on their land. Full funding for NYC's parks and community composting is critical for the health of all New Yorkers, the city's resilience to climate change, providing green jobs, and a sustainable future for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Anita Chan
anita82593@gmail.com

Hello, my name is Babbie Dunnington, and I am testifying as a private citizen with firsthand experience in how these budget cuts impact quality of life on the neighborhood level of community gardens.

I have the honor of working with 550 community gardens which are critical green public spaces that improve our lives and allow communities to learn, grow food, and connect with neighbors in a meaningful way.

Over the years, in GreenThumb, like in other divisions of Parks, permanent staff lines have been cut completely or delayed due to hiring freezes, making it harder and harder to serve community gardens. This year, *especially*, the seasonal workers from Play Fair have been crucial to GreenThumb community gardens. Not only have these workers coordinated with the community to plan and procure over 382 features for 303 different community gardens, mind you-they started just last fall to work within the fiscal year deadlines, and this planning involves site visits, measurement, and extensive communication. Not only have these incredible workers analyzed environmental data-heat vulnerability, stormwater and flood hazard, and on the ground data from community engagement to prioritize support with shade structures, rainwater catchment systems, tool sheds, compost bins, fences, benches, special features, and much needed treework to ensure safety and well being for the people of NYC. Not only did they apply for grants and pivot quickly when budget code freezes prevented almost half of originally planned purchases from going through, persevering despite the fact that it was hard not to feel like a set up to fail.

Not only did PlayFair workers bring almost 50 free and open to the public community gardening workshops all over the city and plan 50 more for the remainder of the fiscal year. But this year, with the lack of permanent staff, now seasonal positions funded through PlayFair have become fundamental to GreenThumb's basic operations and programming.

Without these current seasonal employees at GreenThumb, there would have been no workshops for the last 5 months. There would be no visioning program to support gardens in creating accessible and high quality community space, including in GreenThumb community gardens at NYCHA, and no volunteer program, a program that came directly from the requests of community gardeners asking for support. All these programs will not exist to support community gardeners without sustained and consistent staff lines. We need leaders who care about the quality of life for all New Yorkers, and that means increasing Parks employee headcount, not cutting it.

Thank you for allowing me to speak. My name is Betsy Silverman and I live on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. I recently completed the Urban Naturalist certificate program at the New York Botanical Garden. I am a Street Tree Steward and a Super Steward trained by The NYC Parks Department. I am a Trail Maintainer trained by the Natural Areas Conservancy. At least once a week I Volunteer in Van Cortland Park removing invasive species and keeping trails clear and safe for the public. Additionally, I am a weekly Volunteer in the Natural Areas of Central Park and have been doing that for over a year.

I am testifying today for many reasons, as someone who works in the parks very frequently, I want to say that park workers do much more than keep bathrooms clean and stocked. They do much more than picking up trash. They do more than clear ice and snow. You have heard so much about those functions. Those are important, but they are the absolute minimum service that the parks workers provide. There are also many highly skilled and educated employees who are not easily replaced.

But I want to discuss another angle that I feel has not been addressed enough.

Parkland is our best local defense against climate change. We live surrounded by water. Water that is rising. Our streets and sidewalks are nonporous. Nonporous surfaces that offer nowhere for water to go. So when it rains, water floods our streets and our basements. It erodes our shores and has the power to destroy our city. Our buildings are steel and glass, they reflect and intensify the life-threatening heat. If our city and our homes are going to be buffered from rising waters, dry during huge precipitation events, cooled in scorching heat, we need to fund the park system.

Nature in the form of healthy street trees, functioning bioswales and drains, healthy parkland, urban forests and wetlands are our best chance for salvation from the changes that are occurring in nature. We need to have healthy parks as green infrastructure; we need to invest in our parks not simply to clean them and lock them. Those are very important, but we need to do more than simply work to keep up. We need to move forward.

We need to cool the city, we need to handle everyday weather events but, in the bigger picture, we need to ready our city for the next huge heat wave and for the next Superstorm Sandy. NYC has been battered every year since 2020 by heat waves and by powerful storms: Fay, Henri, Ida, Elliot, and Ophelia. This is only going to happen more frequently and more intensely. Without park funding we are doomed to have repeated disasters.

It is said that budgets represent values. If we value the very existence of the city we live in, we need the budget to reflect that. Honestly, the cuts in park budgets just makes me sad. Is the city giving up on its own future?

Thank you for hearing my words. I specifically want to thank my new local councilman, Shaun Abreu of District 7, and his caring thoughtful staff for working with me and The 95th Street Block Association to care for our environment by supporting our efforts to care for our neighborhood's trees and to fill our empty tree pits. I know that they understand that local government has the power to impact the quality of daily life and that they work hard to make our lives better and safer. I hope this committee will follow Councilman Abreu's lead.

My name is Catalina Taylor. I am a 16-year-old student living in New York City with my parents and sister. Growing up in New York City has so many different meanings. Being a city kid means going to my local park and playing in the sprinklers, learning how to ride a bike, and making new friends. Exploring the greenery with my parents and walking the dog with my sisters. The park is also an important place for the adults of this city. The love and care with which I have seen people tirelessly organize community events and litter cleanups has never ceased to amaze me, and I can say with 100% certainty that I have never met anyone more passionate than those who fight for the people of this city and their rightful greenspaces. Without this funding, our parks will no longer be safe places for people to make memories in. In their current condition, our parks are already littered with dangerous and unsanitary things. This cut will make that issue ten times worse. So, this is me as a citizen of the City of New York. Reaching out to ask our public officials to reconsider and think of the children, the families, the memories that this land is built on.

Christian Murphy
New York City Council Committee on Parks and Recreation
FY25 Preliminary Budget Hearing
March 21, 2024

Good afternoon, my name is Christian Murphy and I am an avid user of parks and green spaces in NYC. I am proud to testify today on the importance of our City's park system and increasing the City's parks budget to 1%. Thank you, Chair Krishnan and members of the Committee on Parks and Recreation for the opportunity to testify.

I grew up spending my weekends and evenings in various parks across NYC, in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and the Bronx. Having access to so many amazing green spaces was instrumental in shaping my love for the environment and eventually leading me to a career in environmental protection and advocacy. In recent years, I have come to understand that today's youth might not be privileged to have the same experiences that I took for granted. I have seen how quickly our parks and green spaces can fill up with litter and how Parks staff struggle to keep up with maintenance and repairs.

The Parks Department should serve as a resource for New Yorkers looking for stable and honest employment. With good benefits and professional development opportunities, the Parks Department should be a pipeline for New Yorkers to work and take care of our city with pride. Instead, City Hall is increasingly undermining this with rampant budget cuts that diminish this opportunity when so many New Yorkers are looking for work. What's more, we are increasingly dependent on volunteers giving their free labor to the care and maintenance of our parks and green spaces. This is completely unacceptable.

When we look at how other major cities fund and respect their Parks & Rec Departments, NYC becomes a national embarrassment. Cities like Los Angeles, which has about half of the acreage that NYC Parks has, funds their parks department more than 5 times as much. It's a similar story in many other cities. We look to our decision makers to help New York City keep its title as the greatest city in the world, and it is clear that City Hall is actively working against this. It is shameful and disgraceful.

If NYC values essential workers and the essential services they provide, then it is a stark hypocrisy to continuously slash funding from our Parks Department. During the height of the covid pandemic, I sought refuge and sanctuary in our parks, when nowhere else felt safe for me and my loved ones. I know that many other New Yorkers had similar experiences. We collectively learned how essential our parks and their staff were for our health and well-being, and that is now being jeopardized by these unacceptable budget cuts. Since the start of the pandemic, the city has actually reduced the amount of staff taking care of our parks, despite the fact that there weren't even enough staff to begin with. The city has continuously underfunded this essential service and spit in the face of those who depend on parks daily.

Unsurprisingly, our environmental justice communities are suffering the most from these budget cuts. Parks in environmental justice communities are the most overcome with trash, and are

becoming less safe because of their state of disrepair. It breaks my heart to know that our decision makers in City Hall are willfully allowing this to happen, and creating a reality where community members are telling their children and loved ones not to visit their local parks out of safety concerns.

Parks are sanctuaries not just for New Yorkers but also hundreds of species of wildlife. I have personally rescued multiple animals who were trapped by garbage, fully understanding that if I didn't intervene they would have died. I can only assume that many more animals aren't so lucky and become unfortunate victims to the amount of trash piling up in our parks. There is no reason for us to accept this.

I am urging City Hall to stop cutting the Parks budget and give just 1% of the city's budget to the Parks Department. It's time for City Hall to do the right thing.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Christian Murphy

Dear New York City Council,

As a NYC native I have been to many parks in the 5 boroughs. I have seen the improvements made and the improvements needed. With mayor Eric Adams cutting funding to these parks and the effort made to have these improvements will be lost. I am advocating for increased budgeting towards NYC's parks.

Christiane Bamezon

Testimony for NYC parks:

I have been to many parks in all five boroughs. I seek these places out. I have taken buses, boats, and trains to visit these places. I have traveled from where the 4 train starts to where it ends, just to visit a park. I started a YouTube Channel focused on them. I have since spoken to many people including some Council Memebbers who may be here today.

I have been spending a lot of time at Crispus Attucks Playground in Brooklyn. Crispus Attucks was the first person killed in the Revolutionary War, A freed slave, he became a Martyr and American Hero. The park that bares his name was the first park named after a African American figure in NYC. 20 years ago this playgrounds was called by another name, Prostitution Park

Since that time, a new playground with new equipment was built. The basketball court was renamed for Biggie Smalls, who grew up nearby. It now attracts people of all ages from throughout communit.

I see glimpses of this playgrounds past reputation though. CM Robert Holden talks about a return of the bad old days of NYC. I'm from California so my NYC experience is informed by movies and TV. What I witnessed in the bathroom at Crispus Attucks is as graphic as any scene from a gritty 70's movie. The bathroom is often a drug den and he aesthetic is there, the flickering lights, the deep shadows, the dirt. Many of the bathrooms are like this and you all know it!

This park is often filled with trash and has many dead trees that have never been replaced. It has a sizable community center that is only used for one class. All of this makes me sad.

Parks need a larger investment and a reassessment on how that investment is spent. We need parkies to keep these places clean, to make us feel safe, to make us feel connected. Without safe, clean parks NYC would be a pretty shitty palce to live.

Sincerely,

Darren Hinton
<https://playnyce.nyc/>

March 21, 2024

TESTIMONY:

I am Ellen M. Cooper, citizen of NYC for more than 70 years. As a Master Composter, 2024 graduate of the Sanitation Foundation's Trash Academy, and active member of the Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory Board's Organics and Residential Recycling Committees, I am hyper aware of the critical role that the Urban Forest plays in the lives and health and equity of NYC residents. It is also essential for mitigation of climate changes that we are experience now and will increase in years to come.

Please ensure full funding for FY 25 NYC Parks Budget. The health of our tree canopy has an outsize effect on our quality of life. It is an urgent element of NYC's sustainability efforts, which the city announced and promised to New Yorkers through several administrations. Please don't go backwards.

Thank you,

Ellen M. Cooper

Manhattan, District 2

I'm proud to be a Parkie and I've had the pleasure of working with several "one shot" funding employees hired through PlayFair. And Commissioner Sue's responses on these questions were incomplete truths. The combination of the hiring freeze and one shot funding means that talented people hired for the one shot funding are barred from full-time positions. They are ineligible. Instead, the agency has had to hire less competent and proficient employees from elsewhere in the agency, passing over these talented one shot employees. HR and Budget have been inflexible. Oh, sorry, you're not eligible, is simply the refrain we're told to say over and over. So one shot funding employees stay in their lower roles and with no job security while we're forced to hire people we may not even want to hire while a perfect candidate with great experience cannot be hired because they are on a one shot funding line and those different hiring lines cannot be mixed.

I cannot urge you enough to go beyond Parks or other agency senior staff when exploring budget impacts to agencies. Commissioner Sue is great and the best commissioner we have had in decades. But she is still a mayoral appointee with a job dependent on the mayor. Only asking mayoral appointees questions under oath will simply result in the mayor's lines and responses fed back to you. If you want the truth of impacts on the civil service and one shot employees than please ask us directly! Where is it written that you can only hold a hearing involving agency heads? Where are the laws that say you can only ask department senior staff to testify? Between the Parks department press policy and agency culture we are intimidated and worried to openly testify. That's why your not getting a more full picture of things and evasive answers. Create a better mechanism and call for true rank and file testimony because the current system is not working and the barriers to true rank and file organizing on this are too high and the unions have not put out a call. We need you to ask questions beyond the agency leaders.

Erica Clifton

March 21, 2024

Hayden Brockett
Founding Member
New York Clean Air Collective

As the father of two children, proud owner of an adorable dog, and thus a daily user of New York City's amazing parks, I write to OPPOSE Mayor Adams's budget cuts that will hurt our City's parks and devastate the lives and livelihoods of city workers. I fully support the efforts of the New York League of Conservation Voters and Play Fair for Parks Coalition to ensure that the City spends AT LEAST one percent of its budget on park funding. Anything less is unacceptable.

I also write as a member of the New York Clean Air Collective ("NYCAC"), which is a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting New Yorkers' right to enjoy clean air, including through helping participants in the Citizens Air Complaint Program. We work to combat environmental racism and to mitigate the causes and effects of climate change, especially around schools and in and beside New York's parks.

Today, I want to highlight the importance of clean air in and around our parks. **New York's parks are the lungs of our city! But air pollution kills. It makes people sicker, and it reduces life expectancy.** Only in green spaces that are separate from deadly traffic and pollution can New York's children play safely. The City Council recently passed Local Law 58 (Intro. 606), which expanded the Air Code's one-minute ban on illegal idling to include parks. The NYCAC applauds the Council's commitment to protecting clean air, but it must follow up with action!

Unfortunately, right now, parks and green spaces are not equitably accessible to all. Low-income communities and communities of color face many barriers to accessing public green spaces. These barriers, created largely by systemic racism, have a long history in NYC and have exacerbated health disparities. Over time, they have manifested in many forms, yet when examined together they reveal a clear pattern of environmental injustice (source: [WE ACT for Environmental Justice](#) and [Trust for Public Land](#))

Historically, economically marginalized communities and communities of color are among the worst affected by vehicular pollution. An analysis from the Union of Concerned Scientists reports that minority communities in New York inequitably bear the burden of the highest exposure to these toxic transportation emissions. That analysis finds Asian Americans, people of Latin or Hispanic

descent, and African American New Yorkers are exposed to higher levels of PM2.5 pollution from cars, trucks, and buses than white New Yorkers. Incredibly, Asian American residents are exposed to twice as much PM2.5 pollution as white residents. New Yorkers of Latin or Hispanic descent are exposed to 81 percent more vehicle pollution than white residents, and African American residents to 72 percent more. *See* <https://www.ucsusa.org/sites/default/files/attach/2019/06/Inequitable-Exposure-to-Vehicle-Pollution-NY.pdf>.

In addition, New Yorkers in low-income communities of color have fewer park [conservancies or private funding](#) to help maintain open spaces, and have [33.5% less park space per person within a 10-minute walk](#) compared to white communities. Inadequate funding for the Department of Parks and Recreation disproportionately already disadvantaged communities.

We need additional funding to keep our parks safe, open, and well-maintained. The Council must reject Mayor Adams’s budget cuts and spend AT LEAST one percent of the budget on parks.

As the Council has recognized in passing Local Law 58 last session, the air around and in our parks must be clean. Otherwise, we will only be letting our children out to be poisoned while they play. That is why the NYCAC stands ready to support and expand the Citizens Air Complaint Program, which is the City’s primary enforcement mechanism for the Air Code, which protects our parks. This program is also the most successful citizen environmental program in the world! In 2023, citizens submitted 82,615 complaints for idling in New York. These complaints resulted in \$38 million in deterrent penalties imposed, up from approximately \$8 million in 2022.

Unfortunately, the proposed budget cuts could compromise the protections for parks—where New Yorkers seek to find a refuge from noise and pollution. In addition to restoring funding for parks, the Council should urgently pass Intro 291, which increases the penalties on companies that let their trucks or buses illegally idle their engines in New York. While we have a great set of idling laws, which are helping clean up our air, the penalties are too low. That means big companies like ConEd, Verizon, and Amazon just pay the fines as a cost of doing business—but don't shut off their engines. Intro 291 will fix this by making the penalties have real teeth to stop illegal idling in and around our parks.

The Council must protect our children, environment, and our parks by reversing the Mayor’s budget cuts, spending one percent of the budget on parks, and by strengthening and fully enforcing the laws against air pollution in our parks.

New York City Council Committee on Parks
Thursday, March 21, 2024
Committee on Parks and Recreation - Preliminary Budget Hearing

Good afternoon, My name is Jennifer Seda and I'm proudly Bronx born and raised and a lifelong NYC Parks user.

During the height of the pandemic, parks were the few places where people felt comfortable outside of their homes. Highlighted the problem that our Parks don't get the resources necessary to serve our community's needs.

Disparity between the maintenance needs of our Parks, and the resources actually allocated to them has only grown. (from testimony template: NYC Parks now has fewer workers than it did before the pandemic despite increased demand and clear need for these spaces, and thousands fewer workers than it had decades ago.)

Low income communities in the Bronx have been marginalized and excluded from equitable investment for far too long, and we know from experience that when budgets are cut, these cuts impact us the most.

Our communities continue to be stretched thinner and thinner - we simply can't afford to lose these jobs, or the essential services these workers provide. We already face a host of environmental justice inequalities - we cannot afford fewer safe, clean green spaces.

I work for the Bronx River Alliance, and we're proud to engage community stewards

Community of dedicated, passionate, talented volunteers help fill the gaps left by years upon years of budget cuts. But the gap between what volunteers can provide, and the professional maintenance that our Parks desperately need, continues to grow wider and wider.

This disparity is not fair, it's not equitable. It's unreasonable and cruel to put the onus of park maintenance on unpaid volunteer labor, when our community members deserve good jobs and the free time to actually enjoy the parks that they steward.

Thank you

Jennifer Seda

My name is Kenneth Otu Owusu. I'm a sixteen year old high school junior, I live in the Bronx. The parks are a sanctuary and place of gathering for the residents in the community. It is a place where we come together to do things for the benefit of the community. Just last year, we hosted a trash pickup day and a lot of people showed up. Shown how much they cared for the park.

Hello,

As a native New Yorker, I can attest to the importance of having access to well-maintained parks. Some of my happiest memories as a kid happened at a NYC park. It was there on the clean grass and dirt where I would fall after trial and error trying to learn how to ride a bike. On the playgrounds, my imagination came to life and I would swing across the monkey bars with my siblings. As a teen, I would eat ice cream with my friends and lay on the grass as we complained about school. New York City parks have remained dear to me since childhood and even now as I enter adulthood. They are an essential part of NYC culture and deserve to be kept in pristine conditions for residents. Parks should remain a sanitized and protected area of New York City to keep residents happy and why change something that has worked for years?

Thank you for your time!

Kylee Islas

My organization, Battery Park City Authority, is a member of Forest for All NYC, a coalition of nearly 140 organizations committed to justly and equitably protecting, maintaining, expanding, and promoting the NYC urban forest. In the past, the Forest For All coalition has celebrated New York City's commitment to stewarding and expanding our parks and urban forests, however, recent FY24 budget cuts have walked back promises, such as committing to 30% canopy cover, earmarking 1% of the City's budget for NYC Parks, and the unanimous Council passage of historic legislation creating the City's first urban forest plan.

We need trees and greenspaces in our city—this is not a frivolous request. Our climate is warming, and the shade from well-developed tree canopies protects our most vulnerable from the impacts of Urban Heat Island Effect. Without appropriate resources, which the proposed budget cuts would curtail, we cannot keep our parks and greenspaces thriving for the public.

New York City is falling behind other major cities the world over by proposing to disinvest from parks. The proposed FY25 budget would cut \$55 million dollars from NYC Parks (in comparison to the FY24 budget) and hundreds of essential jobs, which threaten a greener, healthier, and more resilient New York City.

I live in a neighborhood that has been historically underserved, dating back to the Robert Moses era. We do not have the parks and tree cover that wealthier, more privileged neighborhoods have. We experience the impacts of climate change more acutely in this neighborhood and others like it, as the summers get hotter and longer. A thriving tree canopy would help my neighbors by providing shade, oxygen, and healthy recreational spaces for everyone.

The preliminary FY25 NYC Parks budget includes:

- Elimination of the tree risk management program and trail formalization program and the civilian positions that supported them
- Reduction in stump removal, which slows the replacement of felled trees with new plantings - hampering the City's goal to reach at least 30% canopy cover
- Elimination of NYC SPARX – a program that teaches STEM to young girls and fosters the next generation of workers with the passion and skills needed to sustain our urban forest

Today, I am testifying for the city to commit to full funding for our urban forest, including to NYC Parks, NYC Housing Authority, public schools, and many other city agencies with trees in their care. I am asking for the City to:

- Follow through on the commitments in PlaNYC to increase access to quality green spaces for all New Yorkers and reinstate the Citywide Trails Program.
- Commit funding for a robust multi-agency planning process to create the citywide NYC Urban Forest Plan mandated by Local Law 148 of 2023 to be completed by July 31, 2025, including sufficient funding for a rigorous community engagement effort

- End the hiring freeze and restore NYC Parks staffing to pre-Covid levels to ensure our parks and the urban forest are safe, clean, and accessible to all New Yorkers (NYC Parks still has nearly 1000 fewer staff than they had before Covid budget cuts)
- Save the roles of the 100 City Parks Workers (CPW's) that will lose their positions at the end of June and add 200 CPW positions to restore staffing levels to pre-Covid. CPW's help clean our parks, which enables more access to trees and green spaces.

New Yorkers need parks now more than ever. I implore you to consider my testimony and that of my Forest For All NYC coalition members. Thank you.

Marieke Bender



**New York City Council Committee on Parks
Thursday, March 21, 2024
Committee on Parks and Recreation - Preliminary Budget Hearing**

My name is Meredith Thomson. I am a resident of Council District 37, a Parks Employee, and a Natural Areas Super Steward. Thank you for your consideration today. Before I begin, I would like to acknowledge that the land we are here fighting to continue caring for today is the ancestral homeland of the Lenni-Lenape People, the original caretakers of what is now New York City. We stand in front of you today to ask the City Council to permanently fund, through Play Fair lines, the care for this Land, because we acknowledge that it is our responsibility to do so.

- The time scales between humans and trees differ by an order of magnitude. As such, our work must operate according to both timescales. We simply cannot do our jobs if our funding is not permanently stable.
- Every single one of our natural areas (11.6% of NYC land, or 21,000) needs management and care. For example, a forest restoration project requires at least **5 years' worth of skilled work on the Land**, let alone the pre-planning needed to facilitate the project. A single restoration site needs to be:
 - Researched (*2+ years*) and prepared **by foresters, crew leads and skilled gardeners** (*6-12 months*);
 - Cleared of truckloads of debris, invasive plants and underground seed banks **by gardeners** (*3-12 months*);
 - Trees grown by **nurseries** (*5+ years*) and ordered **by foresters** (*6-12 months*);
 - Volunteers educated and mobilized by the **Stewardship Team** (*1-3 months*);
 - Trees planted (*1-2 months*) **and** cared for **by volunteers and gardeners** (*5-10 years*), and;
 - **Most importantly**, trees cared **about** by the **park patrons** who were brought together in community by Parks employees (*perpetuity*).
- This doesn't even cover the ongoing endangered species monitoring and ecosystem assessments completed **by ecologists (of which I'm one)**, or the innovative pilot projects designed to improve our knowledge of and protocols for the Land we benefit from. Our city cannot afford to lose Play Fair funding. Not for one year. Not ever.

If you will permanently fund Play Fair, I can promise you we will be here, doing everything in our human power to help protect and care for the city's residents, human and non-human, every year, for the future. Thank you.

I am a resident of Flatbush, Brooklyn, who visits Prospect Park almost daily for recreation, exercise, gathering with my community, volunteering, and connecting with the natural world. I am also the Director of Education at Perfect Earth Project, a member of Forest for All NYC, a coalition of nearly 140 organizations committed to justly and equitably protecting, maintaining, expanding, and promoting the NYC urban forest.

The urban forest is essential to the quality of life of all New Yorkers and NYC Parks play an invaluable role in caring for a significant amount of our city's trees and green spaces. The value of parks was once again put in stark relief this weekend, as the city was inundated with torrential rain, causing flooding throughout the city. As we continue to face more intense precipitation due to climate change, the healthier our parks are, the more they act as sponges to absorb rainwater and prevent damage to our public infrastructure. Through bioswales and raingardens, greenstreets, street tree care, wetlands restoration, the management of green roofs, and the green infrastructure of our parks, the NYC Parks Department is responsible for capture of millions of gallons of stormwater each year. The less cared-for these green spaces, the limited the water storage capacity—as soil becomes compacted and hydrophilic.

Stormwater capture is only one of many, many examples of how NYC Parks makes us a more resilient city. Air quality, physical and mental health, biodiversity, crime reduction—all have been linked to the availability of safe, healthy, well-funded parks.

With this in mind, it is appalling that the FY25 budget would cut \$55 million dollars from NYC Parks (in comparison to the FY24 budget) and hundreds of essential jobs, which threaten a greener, healthier, and more resilient New York City. Failing to adequately care for the urban forest could cost New Yorkers more in the long run; caring for the trees we have and planting more now means cost-savings in the long run.

We demand that you commit to full funding for the NYC urban forest, including to NYC Parks, NYC Housing Authority, public schools, and many other city agencies with trees in their care. Follow through on your commitments in Plan NYC to increase access to quality green spaces for all New Yorkers and reinstate the Citywide Trails Program. End the hiring freeze and restore NYC Parks Staffing to pre-Covid levels. Save the roles of 100 City Parks Workers that would lose their positions at the end of June and add 200 City Parks Workers positions to restore staffing levels to pre-Covid.

Don't destroy what makes NYC resilient. Fund NYC Parks!

Thank you.

Molly Kerker

Brooklyn, NY 11226

Shekar Krishnan, Chair
City Council Committee on Parks
FY25 Budget Hearing

March 21, 2024

Dear Chairman Krishnan,

First and foremost, thank you for holding this hearing.

My name is Nancy Walby, and I am respectfully requesting that the City Council Committee on Parks increase the budget for NYC Parks to at least 1% of the city's FY2025 budget.

I have been a resident of Brooklyn, in Marine Park, for over 50 years, and a member of Community Board 18 and Chair of the Parks Committee for many of those years.

Brooklyn Community Board 18 (CB18) has more parkland than most other community boards in the city. To that point: Canarsie Park has 132 acres and Marine Park (the largest park in Brooklyn) has 530 acres of grassland and precious salt marsh. Additionally, CB18 includes a multitude of smaller parks, ball fields and playgrounds scattered throughout the district which are also under the jurisdiction of NYC Parks.

I am submitting this testimony as a volunteer for the Marine Park Alliance, which assists NYC Parks with a mission to provide cultural, environmental, and volunteer programming in Marine Park for the health and well-being of all New Yorkers. To carry out this mission the group envisions elevating this city park as a southern Brooklyn cultural gem programmatically and ecologically. All programs are free to the public.

Parks are a critical part of our city's infrastructure because they provide a safe place for adults and children to play, exercise, and socialize. All New Yorkers deserve safe, clean, green and resilient parks, pools, beaches and recreation centers.

Unfortunately, the NYC Parks budget has been cut by \$25 million for this fiscal year. And it is my understanding that the FY2025 Preliminary Budget for Parks is \$583 million, nearly \$55 million LESS than the budget for this fiscal year.

The budget cuts to NYC Parks this fiscal year and the proposed budget for the next fiscal year jeopardize the very heart of our communities. These cuts will make it even more difficult for the already understaffed, under-resourced Parks Department to carry out the basic work needed to ensure parks are equitable and accessible for all New Yorkers.

NYC Parks now has fewer workers than it did before the pandemic despite increased demand and clear need for these spaces, and thousands fewer workers than it had decades ago. NYC Parks is chronically underfunded and understaffed which means there are not nearly enough maintenance workers and PEP offices to keep our parks clean and safe.

These cuts will also hinder NYC Park's ability to manage its 15 miles of beaches, 51 recreation centers, 65 pools, 9,899 acres of natural areas, 2,300 athletic courts, 800 ballfields, and 1,000 playgrounds. The reduced budget will inequitably impact the well-being and quality of life of countless individuals and families. Parks are an invaluable resource that fosters physical and mental health, provides spaces for social interaction, and mitigates ecological decline from pollution.

For these reasons it is imperative that the budget for NYC Parks be increased to at least 1% of the city's FY2025 budget.

Thank you for your attention and assistance with this vitally important issue.

Sincerely,
Nancy Walby
Marine Park Alliance

Hi,

I go by Messiah. I'm an eighteen year old high school student in the Bronx. Public parks have been a great source of relaxation for me and most of my friends. After a long day at school, I always look forward to a place to sit and relax, while enjoying nature and that is what the parks provide for me. It is therefore important that parks are maintained and protected.

Thank you.

My name is Rebecca Gonzalez, and I am a parks worker and NYC parks enjoyer. I am urging the council to restore funding for the 51 forest management workers and the funding for the trails formalization program.

I've lived in New York City my whole life and always loved the parks and have grown to love even more of the parks and trails as I've worked here as well. I often have had to switch and jump around jobs due to not knowing whether the funding for my job will be restored and that is not an uncommon story with many of my fellow coworkers. I have continuously come back to work at parks because I love being out in and caring for nature and my home city, and all other New Yorkers deserve to also be able to enjoy these parks as fully as they can as well. These parks cannot continue to function as they do without the parks workers caring for these forests and trails, and my fellow coworkers deserve to know that they will still have a job at the end of every June.

If these jobs are continued to be funded, New Yorkers will continue to have parks that they can go to and enjoy for years to come.

Hello, I am writing in support of Forests for All, to ensure that our urban forests are protected. I also strongly object to the closure of the Queensbridge composting facility and the recent cuts to the city's community composting programs, and I respectfully request that NYC park land be made available for community composting. Composting is a necessary step in achieving our city's sustainability goals; it is bizarre that Parks would evict Big Reuse from the site.

Sarah Perillo

Good afternoon, my name is Suebeen Kim and I am a former intern under both the Natural Areas Conservancy and a NYC Parks affiliate, the Greenbelt Native Plant Center. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

I would like to voice my support for the Play Fair Parks campaign in allocating 1% of the city budget to the NYC Parks Department and alleviating its historically underfunded resourcing. I would also like to voice support in restoring the 2.4 million dollars originally set aside for the Trails Formalization program, as well as the 2.5 million dollars permanently establishing NYC Parks' 101 forestry management and urban park ranger positions, all currently set to expire this summer.

I strongly believe our parks are a valuable avenue for increasing equity in the city. They provide spaces for fellow New Yorkers to foster a sense of community and compassion for nature. Furthermore, they act as one of our leading defenses against excessive heat and flooding, which are compounded by our high concentration of impervious infrastructure. As such, in these unprecedented times of climate extremes, it is more crucial than ever that these areas remain hospitable and efficiently maintained.

Additionally, as a recent graduate in the environmental sciences, I am well acquainted with the pervasive concerns of job instability among those entering the field. As we emerging professionals inherit responsibility for the land around us, I ask our elected officials to acknowledge the heightened need for green jobs and promote an accessible environmental workforce during these next critical decades.

Thank you very much for your time, and to the City Council for their past and current advocacy for NYC's natural areas.

New York City Council Committee on Parks
Thursday, March 21, 2024
Committee on Parks and Recreation - Preliminary Budget Hearing
[Turi McKinley]

Good afternoon, my name is **Turi McKinley**, and I am a member of the M'Finda Kalunga garden and a long time resident of the Lower East Side. I thank you for holding this hearing.

New Yorkers deserve a fully funded, safe, clean, green and resilient parks system. The budget cuts to NYC Parks this year and the proposed budget for the next jeopardize the very heart of our communities. These cuts will make it even more difficult for the already understaffed, under-resourced Parks Department to carry out the basic work needed to ensure parks are equitable and accessible for all New Yorkers.

Parks, in all the various forms they exist in New York City, are an invaluable resource that foster physical and mental health, provide spaces for social interaction, and mitigate the climate crisis.

I ask that you ensure full funding for our Parks System – this year and all years moving forward. The current 5% NYC Parks budget cut removes \$25M for this fiscal year, and the FY2025 Preliminary Budget is nearly \$55M less than the budget for this fiscal year. This is too great a cut to this valuable resource.

The impact of these cuts will result in nearly 1,000 fewer parks workers, making it impossible for the agency to ensure parks are safe, clean, green, and resilient across the city. NYC Parks now has fewer workers than it did before the pandemic despite increased demand and clear need for these spaces, and thousands fewer workers than it had decades ago.

NYC Parks is chronically underfunded and understaffed: there are not nearly enough maintenance workers and PEP officers to keep our parks clean and safe. The NYC budget has grown by 127% since 1980, and every other frontline city agency's budget has grown by between 127%-165%, while NYC Parks has only grown by 72%. This is too small and an inequitable pattern, that will be further increased by the proposed cuts.

I ask that 1% of the city budget go for NYC Parks. Mayor Adams repeatedly committed to this investment but hasn't yet followed through. Parks are critical infrastructure for public health and safety and are drivers of social equity. They should be funded as such.

Thank you,

Turi McKinley
Member of M;Finda Kalunga Community Garden

New York City Council Committee on Parks and Recreation
FY25 Preliminary Budget Hearing
March 21, 2024

My name is Victoria Toro. I'm proudly Bronx born and raised, a lifelong NYC Parks user, and voter.

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, parks were the few places where people felt comfortable outside of their homes. This highlighted the problem that our Parks don't get the resources necessary to serve our community's needs. The disparity between the maintenance needs of our Parks, and the resources actually allocated to them has only grown. NYC Parks now has fewer workers than it did before the pandemic despite increased demand and clear need for these spaces, and thousands fewer workers than it had decades ago.

New Yorkers deserve a fully funded, safe, clean, green and resilient parks system. The budget cuts to NYC Parks this year and the proposed budget for next fiscal year jeopardize the very heart of our communities. These cuts will make it even more difficult for the already understaffed, under-resourced Parks Department to carry out the basic work needed to ensure our city's parks are safe, clean, accessible, and resilient for all New Yorkers.

Low income communities in the Bronx have been marginalized and excluded from equitable investment for far too long, and we know from experience that when budgets are cut, these cuts impact us the most. Our communities continue to be stretched thinner and thinner - we simply can't afford to lose these jobs, or the essential services these workers provide. We already face a host of environmental justice inequalities - we cannot afford fewer safe, clean green spaces.

I work for the Bronx River Alliance, and we're proud to engage community stewards, who are dedicated, passionate, and talented volunteers. They help fill the gaps left by years upon years of budget cuts. But the gap between what volunteers can provide, and the professional maintenance that our Parks desperately need, continues to grow wider and wider. This disparity is not fair or equitable. It's unreasonable and cruel to put the onus of park maintenance on unpaid volunteer labor, when our community members deserve good jobs and the free time to actually enjoy the parks that they steward.

I demand 1% of the city budget for NYC Parks. Parks are critical infrastructure for public health and safety and are drivers of social equity. They should be funded as such.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Victoria Toro
Bronx, NY
10461

New York City Council Committee on Parks

Thursday, March 21, 2024

Committee on Parks and Recreation - Preliminary Budget Hearing

Good afternoon, my name is Yunxuan Liao, and I represent myself. We are a member of the Play Fair for Parks Coalition, which includes over 400 organizations from across the five boroughs, many of whom will testify today. We thank the City Council Committee on Parks Chair Shekar Krishnan for holding this hearing.

New Yorkers deserve a fully funded, safe, clean, green and resilient parks system. The budget cuts to NYC Parks this year and the proposed budget for next fiscal year jeopardize the very heart of our communities. These cuts will make it even more difficult for the already understaffed, under-resourced Parks Department to carry out the basic work needed to ensure parks are equitable and accessible for all New Yorkers.

Beyond parks, these cuts will hinder the agency's ability to manage its 15 miles of beaches, 51 recreation centers, 65 pools, 9,900 acres of natural areas, 2,300 athletic courts, 800 ballfields, and 1,000 playgrounds. They will inequitably impact the well-being and quality of life of countless individuals and families. Parks are an invaluable resource that foster physical and mental health, provide spaces for social interaction, and mitigate the climate crisis.

The NYC Parks budget has been cut by 5%, or \$25M, for this fiscal year. NYC Parks now has fewer workers than it did before the pandemic despite increased demand and clear need for these spaces, and thousands fewer workers than it had decades ago.

We demand 1% of the city budget for NYC Parks. Mayor Adams repeatedly committed to this investment but hasn't yet followed through. Parks are critical infrastructure for public health and safety and are drivers of social equity. They should be funded as such.

All New Yorkers deserve safe, clean, green, and resilient parks, pools, beaches, and rec centers.

Thank you,

Yunxuan Liao

Hello NYC I been a resident for 8 years in the Bronx and unfortunately with the news that I have heard I'm very heartbroken. Since I was 10 the park become my home. My mother and father were struggling at that time and we had to live in a tiny room, my mother used to get me and my brother up at 7am and take us to the park during the summer time. Everyday from 7am - 6pm I was in the park and I never got bored of it, each day it was a new adventure for me and my brother. We went on walks , played in the swings and went to events sometimes held in parks. As I look now to the new updates the park has I am happy to walk everyday with my dog and enjoy the nature of the park. This is why I believe that we shouldn't cut the funds of the NYC parks because a lot of people actually enjoy and use the parks just like me.

Parks Department Budget, Staffing, PEG

While there is much to say and has been said about the lack of regular funding for the Parks Department, not nearly enough is said about fraud, waste, and abuse, and chronic unwillingness to manage out underperforming and incompetent employees.

The Mayor’s Program to Eliminate the Gap (PEG) has forced the Parks Department to cannibalize its own headcount and staffing lines. While supervisors and managers at all levels have every year been discouraged from working to manage out problematic employees. There are no required supervisory refreshers. And there is no required training – annual or otherwise – on steps required to begin termination proceedings. Indeed, to discuss trying to terminate employees is considered unprofessional, disgraceful, and counter to the views of the unions. And I say this as a proud Parkie and union member of almost 9 years.

Instead, we tolerate chronic overtime abuse, sometimes totaling more than 500 or even 1000 hours (see table below pulled from NYC Open Data). We are asked to ignore Parkies that openly flout residency requirements, gossiping about their mortgages for New Jersey homes. We are asked to be patient with staff we cannot perform essential aspects of their job, confused by simple operations in email or sharing documents. To mention any of these issues is to be “a bad team player.”

Parks requires a cultural shift towards competency and accountability. I humbly ask that anyone who has not yet read “Boss of the Beach” (<https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2020/06/peter-stein-nyc-lifeguards.html>) to understand what the worst excesses of this organizational culture have allowed. And Mr. Stein still made an annual salary of \$213,473 last year. By comparison, Mark Focht, the Deputy Commissioner and COO of the Parks Department made \$193,000. Council Member Shekar Krishnan made \$148,500. For those that think these issues are simply union issues, please refer to the Department of Investigation’s Lifeguard Report (<https://www.nyc.gov/assets/doi/reports/pdf/2021/Lifeguard%20Report12.13.21.pdf>). Page 14, in particular, makes clear that management and organizational culture play a tremendous role in supervision, discipline, and consequences. Yes, the Mayor and the City took a positive step forward in requiring Liam Kavanaugh to retire as First Deputy Commissioner, but still, far, far, far more needs to be done to create an organizational culture of professionalism and competency and accountability and to undo the decades of damage done. We owe the public, our ultimate bosses, nothing less, and anyone who believes otherwise, should not be working in city government.

I ask that the City Council work with all agencies – potentially through DCAS – to consider necessary trainings, including annual refreshers, to assist the Parks Department and all agencies in better managing their most problematic employees. We owe it to the public and, indeed, future generations, to be better stewards of the City budget, including long-term pension impacts of problem employees. We should not be tasked with retaining problem individuals and maintaining jobs for them (often at the expense of quality seasonal employees who are rendered ineligible for these full-time salary lines), but should instead be working to create a workforce capable of best serving and reflecting the public.

Fiscal Year	Payroll Number	Agency Name	Last Name	First Name	Mid Init	Agency Start Date	Work Location Borough	Title Description	Leave Status as of June 30	Base Salary	Pay Basis per	Regular Hours	Regular Gross Paid	OT Hours
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	JARRETT	DENESE	A	6/12/2006	MANHATTAN	URBAN PARK RANGER	ACTIVE	50635	Annum	2080	50496.16	2244.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	BENJAMIN	HAROLD		11/10/2014	BROOKLYN	RECREATION SUPERVISOR ASSOCIATE URBAN PARK RANGER	ACTIVE	79572	per Annum	1820	77482.47	1608
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	FISHER III	EARL	N	3/30/1991	MANHATTAN	RANGER	ACTIVE	59149	per Annum	2080	58986.97	1586.5

2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	COPPOLA	MICHAEL		5/2/2012	MANHATTAN	SUPERVISOR PLUMBER	ACTIVE	416.78	per Day	1820	125756.85	1545
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	SANCHEZ	DOMINGO		6/11/1999	MANHATTAN	COMMUNITY COORDINATOR	ACTIVE	85830	per Annum	1820	85933.28	1473.25
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	LAWRENCE	SANDRA	M	6/6/1994	MANHATTAN	ASSOCIATE URBAN PARK RANGER	ACTIVE	59161	per Annum	2080	58998.94	1399.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	OLAIZOLA	DIANA	L	9/14/2014	BROOKLYN	PARK SUPERVISOR	ACTIVE	79427	per Annum	1910	63561.59	1344.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	SINGH	MANJIT		5/11/2001	BROOKLYN	ASSOCIATE PARK SERVICE WORKER	ACTIVE	57192	per Annum	2080	57261.76	1342.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	MAXWELL	TYREE	B	5/27/2019	BRONX	CITY PARK WORKER	ACTIVE	43626	per Annum	2080	43900.57	1327.75
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	SUY	PHEN		1/27/2016	BROOKLYN	GARDENER	ACTIVE	54552	per Annum	2080	54615.85	1261
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	FORTUNA	YONATHAN	A	4/15/2019	MANHATTAN	EXTERMINATOR	ACTIVE	58605	per Annum	1820	58673.33	1259.25
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	AFRAM	ROBERT	O	9/30/2019	MANHATTAN	STATIONARY ENGINEER	ACTIVE	508.8	per Day	2080	132288	1218
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	VEI	JOHN TRUNG		4/6/1987	BROOKLYN	GARDENER	ACTIVE	54689	per Annum	2080	54755.9	1183.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	KNOELL	SHAWN	M	12/27/2012	MANHATTAN	SUPERVISOR PAINTER	ACTIVE	360.08	per Day	1820	93620.8	1177.25
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	SALCEDO	MAXIMO	J	4/22/2013	BRONX	PARK SUPERVISOR	ACTIVE	79427	per Annum	2080	68952.13	1148.25
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	RINAUDO	ANTHONY	C	4/18/2001	BROOKLYN	SUPERVISOR OF MECHANICS	ACTIVE	511.76	per Day	2080	133057.6	1143
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	VELEZ	DANIEL	R	4/1/2019	MANHATTAN	EXTERMINATOR	ACTIVE	58605	per Annum	1820	58578.32	1129.25
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	WINLEY	TARON		10/31/2017	BROOKLYN	CITY PARK WORKER	ACTIVE	43626	per Annum	2117	44353.12	1118
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	HARRISON	WILLIAM	M	10/25/2021	MANHATTAN	STATIONARY ENGINEER	ACTIVE	508.8	per Day	2080	132288	1097.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	JONES	RONNELL	P	6/12/2017	BROOKLYN	CITY PARK WORKER	ACTIVE	43626	per Annum	2119.8	39795.94	1089.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	TORRES	MIGUELA		5/22/2002	BRONX	GARDENER	ACTIVE	54552	per Annum	2080	54615.85	1088.67
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	BATTISTA	CIRO		3/19/2007	BROOKLYN	PARK SUPERVISOR	ACTIVE	94133	per Annum	2080	93647.74	1087.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	LLOPIZ	EDWIN		4/16/2001	BROOKLYN	RECREATION SUPERVISOR	ACTIVE	64764	per Annum	1820	64839.98	1083

2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	ORO	JOSEPH		9/14/1987	MANHATTAN	ASSOCIATE URBAN PARK RANGER	ACTIVE	59395	per Annum	2080	59232.16	1067.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	KONIECZNY	LUKASZ	J	8/12/2013	MANHATTAN	STEAM FITTER	ACTIVE	430.5	per Day	1820	138352.3	1048
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	MEJIA	JESUS		4/18/2007	BROOKLYN	ASSOCIATE PARK SERVICE WORKER	ACTIVE	57091	per Annum	2080	57157.36	1041
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	RAMBUDHAN	GAVASKAR		8/8/2016	MANHATTAN	SENIOR STATIONARY ENGINEER	ACTIVE	563.52	per Day	2080	132835.2	1033.75
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	PUELLO	RAYMOND		5/19/1997	MANHATTAN	URBAN PARK RANGER	ACTIVE	50761	per Annum	2080	49843.19	1012.75
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	MORGAN JR	RONALD	A	6/15/2017	BRONX	PARK SUPERVISOR	ACTIVE	79427	per Annum	2123.4	55520.23	985.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	WELLS	LEONIDAS		9/15/2014	MANHATTAN	URBAN PARK RANGER	ACTIVE	50635	per Annum	2080	50496.16	977.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	MEDINA	ALTAGRACIA		7/4/2003	BROOKLYN	PARK SUPERVISOR	ACTIVE	79427	per Annum	2080	59150.36	965.65
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	O'FIELD	MELVIN		5/14/2014	MANHATTAN	CITY PARK WORKER	ACTIVE	43626	per Annum	2080	43677.06	964
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	SANON	GEORGES	A	10/25/2021	MANHATTAN	OILER	ACTIVE	478	per Day	2080	124280	958.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	JAMES	BELINDA	S	2/19/2020	MANHATTAN	CITY SEASONAL AIDE	ACTIVE	16.88	per Hour	1542.5	25281.58	942.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	SMALL	RAJIN	S	2/2/2015	MANHATTAN	SENIOR STATIONARY ENGINEER	ACTIVE	603.84	per Day	2080	156998.4	932
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	SEEMUNGAL	ROBERTO	S	7/10/1980	BROOKLYN	ASSOCIATE PARK SERVICE WORKER	ACTIVE	57327	per Annum	2080	57397.45	908.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	ZELIKMAN	ALEXANDER		4/21/1998	BROOKLYN	LETTERER AND SIGN PAINTER	ACTIVE	274.58	per Day	1950	71390.8	903.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	CEVILLE	CARLOS	A	9/13/2012	BROOKLYN	ASSOCIATE PARK SERVICE WORKER	ACTIVE	57091	per Annum	2080	63029.43	883.75
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	FIORDIMONDO	PAUL		2/9/2015	BROOKLYN	SUPERVISOR PLUMBER	ACTIVE	416.78	per Day	1820	126061.74	870
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	BERISHAJ	ADON		12/23/2019	BRONX	PARK SUPERVISOR	ACTIVE	79427	per Annum	1865	60033.34	867.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	TAVERAS	NUNEZ	F	7/2/2018	MANHATTAN	STATIONARY ENGINEER	ACTIVE	508.8	per Day	2080	132288	863
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	ANTOINE	JOSHUA	R	12/23/2019	MANHATTAN	EXTERMINATOR	ACTIVE	58605	per Annum	1820	58673.33	859.75
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	ROMERO	CARLOS	A	3/14/2005	BRONX	GARDENER	CEASED	52963	per Annum	1920	50452.8	850.5

2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	KUZMA	WILLIAM	W	8/12/2019	BROOKLYN	PLUMBER	ACTIVE	398.02	per Day	1820	119242.97	845.75
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	EDUSEI	JEFFREY	B	8/29/2005	MANHATTAN	COMMUNITY COORDINATOR	ACTIVE	85740	per Annum	1820	85818.39	844
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	LEON	AUDWIN	E	7/26/2014	BROOKLYN	ASSOCIATE PARK SERVICE WORKER	ACTIVE	57091	per Annum	2080	57157.36	831
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	WALLER	ANTHONY		6/14/2010	MANHATTAN	MAINTENANCE WORKER	ACTIVE	249.28	per Day	2080	64812.8	827.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	RODRIGUEZ	KRYSTLE	R	4/4/2016	BRONX	PARK SUPERVISOR	ACTIVE	79427	per Annum	2080	69748.27	823.75
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	MCMORROW	FRANCIS		5/26/1987	BRONX	PARK SUPERVISOR	ACTIVE	94272	per Annum	2080	94385.09	821.75
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	SMITH	HENRY		5/1/2007	MANHATTAN	ASSOCIATE PARK SERVICE WORKER	ACTIVE	57091	per Annum	2080	55483.21	821.25
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	MUINO	SANTIAGO		7/15/2013	MANHATTAN	ASSOCIATE URBAN PARK RANGER	ACTIVE	59054	per Annum	2080	58892.08	814.25
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	PARSON	STEFON	S	3/17/2005	BROOKLYN	PARK SUPERVISOR	ACTIVE	82645	per Annum	2080	85016.66	807.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	RAMKISOON	MELISA	A	11/1/2021	MANHATTAN	ASSOCIATE URBAN PARK RANGER	ACTIVE	59054	per Annum	2119.7	51617.78	806.75
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	GROCE	STEVIE		2/23/1998	BROOKLYN	RECREATION SUPERVISOR	ACTIVE	86146	per Annum	1820	85605.16	805.58
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	HARRIS	DENNARD		5/11/1998	MANHATTAN	COMMUNITY COORDINATOR	ACTIVE	79595	per Annum	1820	79690.73	799
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	WINT	MARCIA		4/23/2007	BROOKLYN	ASSOCIATE PARK SERVICE WORKER	ACTIVE	57091	per Annum	2080	57352.48	797
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	SAINTE JR JR	ROC		7/15/1993	MANHATTAN	ASSOCIATE URBAN PARK RANGER	ACTIVE	59149	per Annum	2080	58986.97	792
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	O' DOHERTY	PASCHAL	J	8/12/2013	MANHATTAN	SUPERVISOR PAINTER	ACTIVE	360.08	per Day	1820	93620.8	790
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	VALENTIN JR	ANTHONY		5/14/2018	MANHATTAN	URBAN PARK RANGER	ACTIVE	50635	per Annum	2080	50496.16	787.17
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	SOTO CRUZ	EVELYN	J	5/27/2022	BROOKLYN	CITY PARK WORKER	ACTIVE	43626	per Annum	2120	37080.33	779.25
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	MEGNATH	RONN	K	1/27/2020	MANHATTAN	STATIONARY ENGINEER	ACTIVE	508.8	per Day	2080	132288	779
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	MOWATT	JAIME	A	7/1/1992	BROOKLYN	ASSOCIATE PARK SERVICE WORKER	ACTIVE	57306	per Annum	2080	57376.22	775
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	LEWIS	CRAIG	O	2/3/2020	BRONX	EXTERMINATOR	ACTIVE	55241	per Annum	1820	54690.79	772.5

2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	WOODLEY	WINSTON	L	6/14/2021	MANHATTAN	MAINTENANCE WORKER	ACTIVE	239.84	per Day	2112	64355.55	771.25
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	SCOTT	DANIEL	J	2/11/2020	MANHATTAN	CITY PARK WORKER	ACTIVE	43626	per Annum	2080	39134.27	770.25
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	JORDAN	NICOLE		6/28/2000	MANHATTAN	CITY SEASONAL AIDE	ACTIVE	19.81	per Hour	2068.6	41036.7	769.75
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	LEE CHIN	MICHAEL	A	5/9/2016	BROOKLYN	CITY PARK WORKER	ACTIVE	57091	per Annum	2120	49515.29	769.75
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	ANTOINE JR.	ALIX		10/2/2017	MANHATTAN	ASSOCIATE URBAN PARK RANGER	ACTIVE	59054	per Annum	2080	52558.18	769.25
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	BISHOP	KWESI		10/31/2017	BROOKLYN	CITY PARK WORKER	CEASED	42355	per Annum	1608	37720.12	759.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	MARTINEZ	RALPH		3/9/2020	BROOKLYN	PLUMBER'S HELPER	ACTIVE	278.53	per Day	1820	77686	758
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	HODGE	ALLEN		2/8/1999	MANHATTAN	MAINTENANCE WORKER	ACTIVE	249.28	per Day	2080	64812.8	752.75
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	MORALES	HARRY		5/16/2012	MANHATTAN	PARK SUPERVISOR	ACTIVE	79427	per Annum	2080	65842.4	752.75
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	CHEA	KEA	S	11/5/2018	BROOKLYN	CLIMBER & PRUNER	ACTIVE	72273	per Annum	1680	55720.71	751.25
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	COX	RODDIC	O	2/13/2013	MANHATTAN	ASSOCIATE PARK SERVICE WORKER	ACTIVE	57091	per Annum	2080	56842.42	750
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	GLASCO	MICHAEL		3/25/2007	MANHATTAN	COMMUNITY COORDINATOR	ACTIVE	91513	per Annum	1820	91619.9	736.75
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	SORIANO MEZA	MIGUEL	A	5/2/2017	BRONX	GARDENER	CEASED	52963	per Annum	1520	38264.04	732.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	KING	HYACINTH	L	2/28/2014	MANHATTAN	CITY SEASONAL AIDE	ACTIVE	19.78	per Hour	2079.9	41195.65	732
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	PAYNE	HENDERSON		11/10/1991	BROOKLYN	CITY PARK WORKER	ACTIVE	43863	per Annum	2080	43917.02	726
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	GLENN	DARRYL		7/8/1985	BROOKLYN	CITY PARK WORKER	ACTIVE	57597	per Annum	2080	57666.97	718.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	HERRERA	KAREN		7/11/2005	QUEENS	PARK SUPERVISOR	ACTIVE	79427	per Annum	2080	65330.7	712.25
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	POMPEY	COURTNEY	W	4/16/2007	BRONX	ASSOCIATE PARK SERVICE WORKER	ACTIVE	57091	per Annum	2080	57127.31	710
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	RODRIGUEZ LAJARA	MANUEL	O	3/14/2005	MANHATTAN	CITY PARK WORKER	ACTIVE	43626	per Annum	2080	43677.06	708.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	JIMENEZ	ROSANNA	A	6/1/2019	MANHATTAN	GARDENER	ACTIVE	54552	per Annum	2120	55399.84	707.75

2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	GIGLIELLO	MICHAEL		10/19/1988	BROOKLYN	COMMUNITY COORDINATOR	ACTIVE	82148	per Annum	1820	82246.77	705.75
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	MCTERNAN	ANNE	T	8/29/2022	MANHATTAN	ADMINISTRATIVE PARKS & RECREATION MANAGER	ACTIVE	118450	per Annum	1470	92847.56	699.25
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	VACCARO	LUCIANO		3/9/2020	BROOKLYN	MAINTENANCE WORKER	ACTIVE	249.28	per Day	2080	64812.8	697.75
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	PEREZ	GLADYS	M	7/7/2005	MANHATTAN	GARDENER	ACTIVE	75500	per Annum	2080	75570.44	696.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	WARREN	GEORGE		4/2/2007	BRONX	PARK SUPERVISOR	ACTIVE	79427	per Annum	2080	69277.15	695.75
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	LASANTA	EDWIN		3/9/2016	MANHATTAN	CITY PARK WORKER	ACTIVE	57091	per Annum	2080	44266.08	691.75
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	SWIATEK	LUKASZ		2/4/2013	MANHATTAN	STEAM FITTER	ACTIVE	430.5	per Day	1820	137971.5	690.25
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	PALAMAR	MICHAEL	C	12/30/2005	BRONX	PARK SUPERVISOR	ACTIVE	82645	per Annum	2080	82741.66	690
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	COLLINS	NICHOLAS	C	1/13/2020	MANHATTAN	PAINTER	ACTIVE	315.07	per Day	1820	81918.2	688.75
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	GIORDANO	JONATHAN	T	9/25/2006	RICHMOND	ADMIN COMMUNITY RELATIONS SPECIALIST	ACTIVE	89520	per Annum	1820	89274.64	686.75
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	BONILLA	JOSE	A	6/27/2016	BROOKLYN	PLUMBER	ACTIVE	398.02	per Day	1820	120452.43	686
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	FERNANDEZ	FRANCIS	O	9/26/2022	MANHATTAN	EXTERMINATOR	ACTIVE	54533	per Annum	1330	33380.66	675.25
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	CADENAS	MARCO		4/11/2016	MANHATTAN	GARDENER	ACTIVE	54552	per Annum	2080	54615.85	674
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	PAGAN	ANDRES	R	4/30/2013	BROOKLYN	PARK SUPERVISOR	ACTIVE	90153	per Annum	2080	68324.32	673.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	BURDI	WILLIAM	R	7/19/2020	BROOKLYN	CITY PARK WORKER	ACTIVE	57091	per Annum	2080	45095.5	671.75
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	BUCHRIESER	BRIAN	P	11/27/2012	MANHATTAN	ELECTRICIAN	ACTIVE	440.16	per Day	1820	114441.6	670.25
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	WEISS	ETHAN	S	11/29/1999	BROOKLYN	PARK SUPERVISOR	ACTIVE	94181	per Annum	2080	94262.11	670
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	AUGUSTE	WISS		11/22/2013	MANHATTAN	COMMUNITY COORDINATOR	ACTIVE	81689	per Annum	1970	67740.35	668.75
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	MORAN LEON	VICTOR	E	10/10/2013	MANHATTAN	PAINTER	ACTIVE	45.01	per Hour	1874	76329.6	666.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	VELAZQUEZ	RICARDO		6/24/1999	MANHATTAN	PARK SUPERVISOR	ACTIVE	90202	per Annum	2080	90110.33	665.5

2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	WALTON	HOLLY	E	1/6/2020	MANHATTAN	GARDENER	ACTIVE	54552	per Annum	2080	54495.16	665.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	NASH	MICHAEL		10/24/2016	BROOKLYN	SUPERVISOR ELECTRICIAN	ACTIVE	474.04	per Day	1820	120201.2	664
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	FORDE	ISIAH		7/3/2000	BROOKLYN	PARK SUPERVISOR	ACTIVE	90153	per Annum	1890	86943.82	662.87
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	RICHARDSON	KARL	J	6/24/2001	MANHATTAN	CITY PARK WORKER	ACTIVE	43763	per Annum	2080	43816.59	657.25
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	DUTAN	LEONARD	I	8/12/2019	MANHATTAN	URBAN PARK RANGER	CEASED	50635	per Annum	2080	52502.88	656.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	VALENTIC	DINKO		10/20/1998	MANHATTAN	STATIONARY ENGINEER	ACTIVE	508.8	per Day	2080	132288	654
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	SABONI	AVIV		6/27/2016	MANHATTAN	SUPERVISOR PLUMBER ASSOCIATE URBAN PARK	ACTIVE	416.78	per Day	1820	125905.19	653.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	MARTINEZ	JONATHAN	S	8/20/2018	MANHATTAN	RANGER	ACTIVE	59054	per Annum	2080	53863.76	653.1
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	DEJESUS	JOHN		6/28/2007	MANHATTAN	URBAN PARK RANGER	ACTIVE	50635	per Annum	2080	50496.16	650.25
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	SAMAROO	SAMRAJ		4/18/2006	BRONX	GARDENER	ACTIVE	54576	per Annum	2080	54617.36	649.75
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	OVANDO-VALENZUE	ANA	D	10/12/2021	MANHATTAN	URBAN PARK RANGER SENIOR STATIONARY	ON SEPARATION LEAVE	50635	per Annum	2120	51464	649.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	CISLUYCIS	DEAN	R	3/10/2014	MANHATTAN	ENGINEER	ACTIVE	603.84	per Day	2080	156998.4	648.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	KHAIMOV	MIKHAIL	D	11/3/1997	BROOKLYN	PARK SUPERVISOR	ACTIVE	82850	per Annum	2080	82950.55	646.25
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	QUIJANO	MICHAEL	A	3/14/2016	MANHATTAN	SUPERVISOR CARPENTER	ACTIVE	397.6	per Day	1820	102925.2	641.75
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	CHILDS	GERALD		5/9/1997	BROOKLYN	RECREATION SUPERVISOR	ACTIVE	85986	per Annum	1820	84878.71	637.25
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	GUZMAN	GARY		2/28/2022	MANHATTAN	URBAN PARK RANGER	ON LEAVE	50635	per Annum	1512	36702.64	634.75
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	MEDINA	JEAN	S	10/28/2019	MANHATTAN	URBAN PARK RANGER	ON SEPARATION LEAVE	50635	per Annum	2080	50496.16	634.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	SAHOTA	DEEP		11/19/2018	MANHATTAN	STATIONARY ENGINEER	ACTIVE	508.8	per Day	2080	132288	632.25
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	BORTHWICK	JOSEPH	J	9/15/1986	BROOKLYN	PARK SUPERVISOR	ACTIVE	79427	per Annum	2080	65411.85	628.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	RAMOS	ANDREW	M	11/13/2020	BROOKLYN	CITY PARK WORKER	ACTIVE	57091	per Annum	2080	40324.98	627.25

2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	ARGENTO	CHARLES	J	9/9/2019	MANHATTAN	ASSOCIATE URBAN PARK RANGER	ACTIVE	59054	per Annum	2119.1	54361.36	624.75
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	GOODWIN	DOMINIQUE	S	6/15/2016	BRONX	CITY PARK WORKER	ACTIVE	57091	per Annum	2080	49086.56	624.25
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	GIANNOTTA	CHRISTOPHER		7/4/2018	BROOKLYN	MAINTENANCE WORKER	ACTIVE	249.28	per Day	2080	66133.42	623.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	KOGER	DESSIE	R	10/9/2014	MANHATTAN	URBAN PARK RANGER	ACTIVE	50635	per Annum	2080	52465.95	621
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	HARRISON	JERMAINE	L	1/25/2016	MANHATTAN	ASSOCIATE URBAN PARK RANGER	ACTIVE	59054	per Annum	2080	58892.08	620.68
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	MESA	SANTOS		9/11/2006	BROOKLYN	CLIMBER & PRUNER	ACTIVE	75524	per Annum	2080	75590.03	618
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	BROGAN	ANDREW	J	5/7/1984	MANHATTAN	PARK SUPERVISOR	ACTIVE	94593	per Annum	2080	94687.11	617.75
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	MULLINS	KENNETH	J	1/28/2013	MANHATTAN	STATIONARY ENGINEER	ACTIVE	508.8	per Day	2080	132288	617
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	SALCEDO	GEORGE	T	6/27/1989	BROOKLYN	ASSOCIATE PARK SERVICE WORKER	ACTIVE	57417	per Annum	2080	57482.26	616.75
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	DILDINE	JAMES	M	9/30/2013	MANHATTAN	COMMUNITY COORDINATOR	ACTIVE	84140	per Annum	1820	84238.22	616.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	WILLIAMS	ANDREA	D	7/15/1985	BROOKLYN	RECREATION SUPERVISOR	ACTIVE	64764	per Annum	1820	64839.98	611.92
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	GUARDI	MARIO		7/24/2017	MANHATTAN	MAINTENANCE WORKER	ACTIVE	249.28	per Day	2080	64812.8	609
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	POMPOSELLO	THOMAS	A	3/1/2004	MANHATTAN	URBAN PARK RANGER	ACTIVE	50635	per Annum	2080	50496.16	605
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	TORRES	JAIME		7/12/2001	QUEENS	GARDENER	ACTIVE	75500	per Annum	2080	75570.44	605
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	PENA	JOSE	A	9/12/2016	BRONX	GARDENER	CEASED	52963	per Annum	1840	52841.39	594.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	MORAN	OSCAR	M	6/21/2021	MANHATTAN	THERMOSTAT REPAIRER	ACTIVE	398.02	per Day	1820	110892.6	592
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	MADDEN	MICHAEL	J	8/11/2003	MANHATTAN	SUPERVISOR CARPENTER	ACTIVE	397.6	per Day	1820	103376	589.75
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	WEGLARZ	ADAM		9/9/2013	BRONX	PAINTER PRINCIPAL	ACTIVE	315.07	per Day	1820	81918.2	587
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	RUIZ	MARIA	I	4/30/2007	MANHATTAN	ADMINISTRATIVE ASSOCIATE - NON SUPVR	ACTIVE	83000	per Annum	1820	69723.06	583.75

2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	JORDAN	SCOTT	P	1/19/2009	MANHATTAN	SUPERVISOR PLUMBER	ACTIVE	416.78	per Day	1820	122422.23	581
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	SMITH	DEVON	F	11/14/1988	MANHATTAN	BLACKSMITH'S HELPER	ACTIVE	344.48	per Day	2080	89564.8	579.75
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	VIGIL	DOMINGO	G	10/28/2019	MANHATTAN	ASSOCIATE URBAN PARK RANGER	ACTIVE	59054	per Annum	2080	50657.62	579.25
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	LILLEY	JAYME	N	6/28/2000	MANHATTAN	ASSOCIATE URBAN PARK RANGER	ACTIVE	59054	per Annum	2080	58892.08	577.75
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	MARTINEZ RUBIO	CARLOS	A	10/5/2015	MANHATTAN	ADMIN COMMUNITY RELATIONS SPECIALIST	ACTIVE	134000	per Annum	1820	122693.99	574.75
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	NAZARIO JR	MAXIMO		6/21/2021	BROOKLYN	CITY PARK WORKER	ACTIVE	43626	per Annum	1384	26739.2	571
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	FINLEY	MICHAEL	A	7/25/2003	MANHATTAN	ASSOCIATE PARK SERVICE WORKER	ACTIVE	57140	per Annum	2080	57184.44	570.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	ALSTON	CLINTON		7/8/1994	BROOKLYN	RECREATION SPECIALIST	ACTIVE	49982	per Annum	1820	50043.46	564.75
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	MERCED	MONICA	M	8/22/2018	MANHATTAN	GARDENER	ACTIVE	54552	per Annum	2120	52481.14	563.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	KONIECZNY	MARCIN	P	8/11/2014	MANHATTAN	PLUMBER'S HELPER	ACTIVE	278.53	per Day	1930	69639.05	563
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	MASON	MICHELE		7/10/2000	MANHATTAN	ASSOCIATE URBAN PARK RANGER	ACTIVE	59113	per Annum	2080	58951.1	561.25
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	CERPA	LOUIS	J	7/27/2015	BROOKLYN	PLUMBER'S HELPER	ACTIVE	278.53	per Day	1820	78003.92	560
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	FRIED	CHARLES	T	8/12/2019	MANHATTAN	PLUMBER	ACTIVE	398.02	per Day	1820	119272.65	555.75
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	YOUNG	THEMICES	L	5/27/2022	BROOKLYN	JOB TRAINING PARTICIPANT	CEASED	16.39	per Hour	1559.5	25560.21	554.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	COTTONE	MARC	V	5/21/2001	MANHATTAN	SUPERVISOR OF MECHANICS	ACTIVE	511.76	per Day	2080	133057.6	548.25
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	GREENE	ERIC	J	2/20/1990	BROOKLYN	COMMUNITY COORDINATOR	ACTIVE	91738	per Annum	1820	91845.32	546.75
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	MITOTAKIS	CONSTANTINOS	L	5/16/2016	MANHATTAN	COMMUNITY COORDINATOR	ACTIVE	84140	per Annum	1820	84238.22	543.75
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	ELLIS	ALFRED	L	6/30/2021	RICHMOND	CITY PARK WORKER	ACTIVE	57091	per Annum	2120	41001.97	543.75
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	DOVER	JERRY	C	4/2/2007	MANHATTAN	PARK SUPERVISOR	ACTIVE	80502	per Annum	2080	80528.5	543
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	CALDERON	ROBERT		7/16/1996	BROOKLYN	PLUMBER'S HELPER	ACTIVE	278.53	per Day	1820	78001.56	542.5

2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	DREW	DEVON		5/9/2022	BROOKLYN	JOB TRAINING PARTICIPANT	CEASED	16.39	per Hour	1254.8	20685.48	542
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	CANINO	DARLENE	B	5/28/1999	MANHATTAN	URBAN PARK RANGER	ACTIVE	50694	per Annum	2080	50555.18	541.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	UBINAS	ADA		6/13/2013	MANHATTAN	GARDENER	ACTIVE	73350	per Annum	2080	73365.2	540.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	THOMAS	DARRELL	J	5/2/2021	BRONX	ASSOCIATE PARK SERVICE WORKER	ACTIVE	57091	per Annum	2120	41755.29	539.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	HILL	SUZANNE	A	6/20/1988	BROOKLYN	PRINCIPAL ADMINISTRATIVE ASSOCIATE - NON SUPVR	ACTIVE	54704	per Annum	1820	54554.24	538.75
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	COFIELD	LATIK	C	4/12/2021	BROOKLYN	CITY PARK WORKER	ACTIVE	57091	per Annum	2120	41106.44	531.25
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	RONDINELLA	LOUIE		2/22/1988	BROOKLYN	PARK SUPERVISOR	ACTIVE	94272	per Annum	2080	94385.09	531
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	ROSS	STEPHON	S	6/10/2013	BROOKLYN	CLIMBER & PRUNER	ACTIVE	75500	per Annum	2080	75580.56	529.25
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	DEWAL	ANJLIKA		12/2/1999	MANHATTAN	PRINCIPAL ADMINISTRATIVE ASSOCIATE - NON SUPVR	ACTIVE	89800	per Annum	1820	89553.88	527.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	YUEN	EDWARD		8/26/2019	BROOKLYN	PLUMBER	ACTIVE	398.02	per Day	1820	119198.45	527.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	RUBINOV	ROMAN		6/30/2020	MANHATTAN	PLUMBER	ACTIVE	398.02	per Day	1820	115494.04	527
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	JIMENEZ DIAZ	ALFREDO		4/18/2022	MANHATTAN	PLUMBER	ACTIVE	398.02	per Day	1854	106556	527
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	FIGUEROA	ANGEL		8/4/1986	MANHATTAN	PARK SUPERVISOR	ACTIVE	94181	per Annum	2080	93235.62	526.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	CARMICHAEL	SHERWYN		6/27/2016	BROOKLYN	PARK SUPERVISOR	ACTIVE	90153	per Annum	2080	63535.29	524.75
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	SMITH	RODERICK	L	5/20/2007	MANHATTAN	CITY SEASONAL AIDE	ACTIVE	19.78	per Hour	2052	40672.61	524.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	O'CONNELL	COLM	J	4/1/1994	MANHATTAN	PLUMBER	ACTIVE	398.02	per Day	1820	120452.43	524.25
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	ANDRIULLI	ROCCO	R	10/24/2016	BROOKLYN	PLUMBER	ACTIVE	398.02	per Day	1820	122193.9	524
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	MCCARTHY	ROBERT	J	4/26/1999	BROOKLYN	PARK SUPERVISOR	ACTIVE	82835	per Annum	2080	82934.63	520
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	FORREST	DERVAN	C	5/17/2017	BROOKLYN	GARDENER	ACTIVE	54552	per Annum	2117.8	49204.32	518.25

2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	WILSON	PAULA		3/14/2014	BROOKLYN	CITY PARK WORKER	ACTIVE	43626	per Annum	2080	44272.32	518
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	AYA	SHARA JOY	R	10/2/2017	MANHATTAN	ASSOCIATE URBAN PARK RANGER	ACTIVE	59054	per Annum	2080	53337.83	517.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	JIMENEZ	GONZALO	F	10/16/2007	MANHATTAN	PAINTER	ACTIVE	315.07	per Day per Annum	1820	81918.2	517.25
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	PUSTAM	ROGER		6/4/2021	BROOKLYN	CITY PARK WORKER	ACTIVE	57091	per Annum	2119.3	46121.87	515.25
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	MUTZE	PAUL	P	5/13/2019	MANHATTAN	PLUMBER	ACTIVE	398.02	per Day	1820	119754.95	514.75
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	GIORDANO	LOUIS	J	1/14/2013	MANHATTAN	SUPERVISOR ELECTRICIAN	ACTIVE	474.04	per Day per Annum	1820	115288.6	514.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	WICKERT	ROBIN		9/22/1989	MANHATTAN	COMMUNITY COORDINATOR	ACTIVE	87349	per Annum	1820	87454.41	514.25
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	ALGOOD	DARRYL	R	4/25/2016	BROOKLYN	RECREATION DIRECTOR	ACTIVE	52351	per Annum	1848	52399.12	513.25
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	ESPADA	JASMIN		6/6/2016	MANHATTAN	ASSOCIATE URBAN PARK RANGER	ACTIVE	59054	per Annum	2080	52664.34	513.25
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	PALACINO IV	JOSEPH		7/21/2020	MANHATTAN	PAINTER	ACTIVE	315.07	per Day per Annum	1820	81918.2	511.75
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	MCLEAN	STEPHEN	G	4/2/2013	RICHMOND	RECREATION SUPERVISOR	ACTIVE	69637	per Annum	1820	66572.81	510.75
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	GUMBS	VERNON	B	5/24/2007	MANHATTAN	ASSOCIATE PARK SERVICE WORKER	ACTIVE	57091	per Annum	2080	57157.36	510.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	SAINT PREUX	OCTAVIA	B	7/17/2019	BRONX	MAINTENANCE WORKER	ACTIVE	249.28	per Day per Annum	2080	47611.08	509.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	JOHNSON	ADRIENNE	D	5/20/2002	MANHATTAN	COMMUNITY COORDINATOR	ACTIVE	86749	per Annum	1820	86853.91	509.25
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	DELICE	TATIANA	S	12/9/2019	BROOKLYN	CLERICAL ASSOCIATE	ACTIVE	50287	per Annum	1980	42281.77	509
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	WALKER	JOHNNY	J	6/26/2017	MANHATTAN	CITY PARK WORKER	ACTIVE	43626	per Annum	2080	43677.06	507.25
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	ACEVEDO	GERALDO		2/19/1985	BROOKLYN	ASSOCIATE PARK SERVICE WORKER	ACTIVE	57525	per Annum	2080	57460.13	506.25
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	PORTER	SHERISE	P	4/4/2011	MANHATTAN	COMMUNITY COORDINATOR	ACTIVE	94779	per Annum	1820	92448.02	506
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	GRANT	BRANDON	B	3/17/2020	MANHATTAN	PARK SUPERVISOR	ACTIVE	79427	per Annum	2080	56674.02	504.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	ANEST	NICHOLAS		6/2/2011	MANHATTAN	PLUMBER	ACTIVE	398.02	per Day	1806	113873.13	504

2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	KINLEY	GREGORY		3/7/2014	MANHATTAN	ASSOCIATE URBAN PARK RANGER	ACTIVE	59054	per Annum	2080	53310.18	502.77
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	GRUBER	CHRISTOPHER	M	9/5/2000	MANHATTAN	SUPERVISOR OF MECHANICS	ACTIVE	511.76	per Day	2080	133057.6	501.5
2023	846	DEPT OF PARKS & RECREATION	SCOTT	RAFAEL		6/6/2011	MANHATTAN	COMPUTER ASSOCIATE	ACTIVE	108810	per Annum	1820	108085.82	501

**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: RESA W. FURTERER

Address: [REDACTED] SIXTH ST

I represent: _____

Address: BROOKLYN, NY 11217

**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: 3/21/2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ralph Baselice

Address: 125 Barclay Street NY NY 10007

I represent: Grievance Rep. Local 983, DC37

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: 3/21/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Aislinn Klein

Address: _____

I represent: The Municipal Art Society of New York

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: Sally Burns

Address: _____

I represent: Union Square Partnership

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: 03/21/21

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: JOHN SORICO

Address: _____

I represent: CENTER FOR AN URBAN FUTURE

Address: 808th AVE, NEW YORK, NY 10011

**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: Suzanna Bailey McLean

Address: 131 Edgemoor Ave

I represent: West Harker Art Fund

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: 3/21/2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rosa Chang

Address: 20 Pine Street NY NY

I represent: Brooklyn Bridge Manhattan

Address: Gotham Park

**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: Giulietta Fiore

Address: 79 moff St.

I represent: Historic House Trust of NYC

Address: Olmsted Center

**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: 3/21/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Christina Taylor

Address: Van Cortlandt Park Alliance

I represent: [Redacted] Bx 154/63

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: SCOTT DALY

Address: _____

I represent: NY JTL

Address: 3636-33RD E L.I.C.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

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

*McPARKIN
BUDGET*

in favor in opposition

Date: 03/21/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: KATHLEEN CORREGAN

Address: [REDACTED] E. 17TH ST. NY, NY 10003

I represent: FM600 OF TOMPKIN SQUARE PH

Address: AVE A/B AT 7TH ST. / 10TH 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: 3/21/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: SARAH BALISTRERI

Address: [REDACTED] JACKSON HEIGHTS NY

I represent: Trees NY 11372

Address: 100 Gold St NY NY

**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: MARCH 21, 2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ROSA CHANG

Address: 20 PINE STREET, #3104

I represent: GOTHAM PARK

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: 3-21-24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Morgan Monaco

Address: _____

I represent: Prospect Park Alliance

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: 3/21/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: CHRISTOPHER LOSCARZE

Address: 17-20 WHITESTONE EXPRESSWAY

I represent: LOCAL 1010 LECT

Address: 17-20 WHITESTONE EXPRESSWAY

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: 3-21-24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: MAXIMUS ALEXANDER BARTON

Address: [REDACTED] LAURELTON NY 11413

I represent: LABORERS LOCAL UNION 1010 11357

Address: 17-20 WHITESTONE EXSWY, WHITESTONE NY

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. F475 Parks Budget Res. No. 8

in favor in opposition

Date: 3-21-24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Emily Walker

Address: 1234 5th Ave.

I represent: Natural Areas Conservancy

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: March 21, 2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Leona Chin

Address: 4540 193rd Street, Flushing, NY 11358

I represent: Kissena Synergy

Address: same as above

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: March 21, 2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Heather Lubov

Address: _____

I represent: City Parks Foundation

Address: 830 Fifth 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: 3/21/2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Raphael Schweizer

Address: [Redacted] Williamsbridge Rd

I represent: Myself

Address: same as above

**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: Deputy Comptroller Margaret Nelson

Address: _____

I represent: NYC Parks

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: Deputy Commish Jennifer Greenfield

Address: _____

I represent: NYC Parks

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: 3-21-24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Merritt Birnbaum

Address: 475 Riverside Drive NYC 10115

I represent: Riverside Park Conservancy

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: Darren Hinton

Address: [redacted] Rogers Ave [redacted]

I represent: Myself

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: Dept Commish Mark Facht

Address: _____

I represent: NYC Parks

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: Dept Commish Therese Braddick

Address: _____

I represent: NYC Parks

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: First Deputy Commissioner Iris Rodriguez-Rosa

Address: _____

I represent: NYC Parks

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: 3/21/2021

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Parks Commissioner Sue Donoghue

Address: _____

I represent: NYC Parks

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: Exec. Fin. Officer David Stark

Address: _____

I represent: NYC Parks

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: [Redacted] Chief Matt Drury

Address: _____

I represent: NYC Parks

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: Deputy Commish Joy Wang

Address: _____

I represent: NYC Parks

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: 3/21/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ALIA SOOMRO

Address: _____

I represent: New York League of Conservation Voters

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: 03/21/2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: JOBY JACOB

Address: [REDACTED] 82ND AVE HOLLY HILLS NY 11427

I represent: EASTERN QUEENS GREENWAY

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: 3/21/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: CYMA Bodnar Kelly

Address: _____

I represent: New York Restoration Project

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: 3/21/2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Joe Piteo

Address: 125 Barclay Street NY NY 10007

I represent: President, Local 983, DC37

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: Mariana Giga

Address: 125 Barclay St

I represent: DC37 Local 983

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

Date: 3/21/2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Isaac Kirk-Davidoff

Address: 125 Barclay Street NY NY 10007

I represent: Community Coordinator (Baby Queensbridge)

Address: Local 371, DC37

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

Date: 3/21/2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Meredith Thomson

Address: 125 Barclay Street NY NY 10007

I represent: Community Associate (Baby Queensbridge)

Address: Local 371, DC37

**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: 3/21/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Adam Ganser

Address: 55 BROAD ST

I represent: NEW YORKERS FOR PARK

Address: 55 BROAD ST



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

