



June 13, 2023

**New York City Council Committee on Parks and Recreation
Oversight: State of the City's Tree Canopy**

Testimony by: Jennifer Greenfeld, NYC Parks Deputy Commissioner for Environment and Planning

Good morning, Chair Krishnan, members of the Parks Committee, and other members of the City Council. I am Jennifer Greenfeld, Deputy Commissioner for Environment and Planning at NYC Parks. I'm pleased to be joined today by our Assistant Commissioner of Forestry & Horticulture, Ben Osborne, our Assistant Commissioner of Natural Resources & Planning, Marit Larson, as well as our Director of Government Relations, Matt Drury. I want to start by noting our appreciation for the Council's continued advocacy for our City parks, and for the resources and support it has provided for our forestry efforts. The urban canopy is one of the most vital resources the city has in ensuring our neighborhoods are healthy and thriving. It provides numerous measurable benefits to our five boroughs, including improving human health and well-being, and I am very proud of the work our Parkies do every day to grow and protect our City's trees. In my testimony today, I will provide information about New York City's extensive tree canopy, this administration's work to expand and care for the urban forest, and a snapshot of some of our strong partnerships supporting this work.

NYC's 42,656 acres of tree canopy is a full 22% of the city's land cover and is best defined as the "cover" or shade provided by our city trees. We are excited to report that the city's canopy grew by 3,252 acres from 2010 to 2017. This robust urban forest provides an incredible array of environmental, social, and economic benefits, such as reducing stormwater runoff, shading buildings, conserving energy by reducing heating and cooling costs, traffic calming, protecting city pavement from rain and sun, noise mitigation, increasing property values, and of course, cleaning and cooling the air, the importance of which became all too clear last week, as we were all reminded of the vital role that air quality plays in our overall health and well-being.

NYC Parks is responsible for just over half of the city's tree canopy - over 22,000 acres. Within that portfolio, NYC Parks manages 7,300 acres of natural area forests (nearly 5 million trees), over 156,000 park trees and over 666,000 street trees. The rest of NYC's canopy grows on a combination of private and public land parcels, such as residential front and back yards,



cemeteries, vacant land, and on NYCHA campuses and other public lands not managed by NYC Parks.

NYC Parks has long taken a strategic, proactive approach to managing the canopy under our jurisdiction. For example, for over 35 years, we have characterized, monitored, and actively managed our 7,300 acres of natural area forests, which are spread across over 90 parks in every borough. In 2018, NYC Parks worked in partnership with the Natural Areas Conservancy (NAC) to develop the Forest Management Framework to guide forest restoration, management, and community stewardship of areas under Parks' jurisdiction. Thanks in large part to the generous support of the City Council, from FY20 to date, Parks has initiated restoration and management across 2,000 acres of natural areas across all five boroughs, including over 850 acres in areas that had not been cared for in the ten years prior to this investment. We planted over 394,000 native trees, shrubs, and herbs, with an additional 44,000 planted just this spring. To accomplish all this, we deploy a team of dedicated professionals, providing incredible green job opportunities and continuity of care for a valuable resource that requires informed and adaptive long-term management.

NYC Parks also takes a proactive approach to managing our tree canopy outside of our natural areas -- the trees that line our city streets and grow in the actively used areas of our parks. These trees play a vital role in keeping New Yorkers cool and healthy, and our latest street and park tree census confirmed that this population is healthy, growing, and diversifying over time. The trees along our city streets are purposefully distributed across every neighborhood because of targeted planting in areas with high asthma rates and high vulnerability to heat, helping to reverse historical disinvestment in underserved neighborhoods.

This Administration is investing further in the expansion of New York City's street tree canopy, adding over \$136 million dollars in tree planting funds over four years. FY22 was a milestone year for the street and park tree planting program, as we successfully planted 13,000 new street and park trees, the highest number of plantings since FY16. I'm pleased to add that we have just surpassed that milestone in FY23 and are on track to plant nearly 15,000 new street and park trees this fiscal year. All New Yorkers deserve to enjoy the benefits provided by trees, so our planting programs take an equitable approach, prioritizing neighborhoods suffering from



extreme heat that have not been well-served in the past, as well as planting trees in locations requested by local New Yorkers.

As important as it is to plant new trees, it is equally important that we maintain our existing trees and preserve the vital benefits provided by our tree canopy in every neighborhood. The most marked increase in tree canopy comes from the natural growth of existing trees. In fact, our partners at The Nature Conservancy identified that up to 87% of the canopy increase that occurred between 2010 and 2017 was from the growth of existing trees. Needless to say, public safety is foremost on our minds in our approach to caring for the trees growing along our streets and in the active areas of our parks. In caring for these trees, we employ an innovative Risk Management approach to prioritize the conditions that present the most risk to New Yorkers and address those immediately. This involves a rigorous inspection program by some of the most qualified and credentialed foresters in the country, accompanied by responsive in-house crews and complemented with contractors who focus on proactive maintenance - including neighborhood block pruning, pest and disease control, and tree preservation during sidewalk repair. Our baseline level of annual funding allows us to maintain a professionally recommended block pruning cycle of 7 years and consistent treatment against pests. In the FY24 Executive Budget, we were thrilled to receive new Mayoral baseline funding to further support our tree maintenance programs: \$2.7M for Tree Risk Management to inspect and identify concerns before they become major problems and perform more systematic and preventive tree care, as well as \$3.3M for a new Climber & Pruner Training Program, which will help to grow the next generation of forestry professionals within the agency.

As a demonstration of our agency's commitment to transparency and efficiency, I also want to remind the Council of the great ways we communicate information to the public about our urban forest. These include our popular online tree map, where you can learn about the trees on your street or in your park and from which you can submit a service request directly to the agency; the tree work hub that maps and lists planned and completed work including pruning, planting, trees and sidewalk repair, and stump removal; and the ever-expanding maps of formalized trail networks in Parks' natural areas, a program which also received additional funding in the FY24 Executive Budget and is governed by a Strategic Trails Plan developed with our partners at the Natural Areas Conservancy.



I would also love to highlight that in May, Parks launched the Great Tree Search 2023, inviting New Yorkers in every community to tell us about exceptional trees that represent their neighborhoods, tell their stories, and contribute to our city's rich cultural history. New Yorkers can use the online tree map to nominate historically, botanically, and culturally exceptional trees, so the winners can be celebrated and have their stories preserved.

The success of our continuously improving canopy would not be possible without the diligent work of our numerous Parks stewards and volunteer groups who generously donate their time and energy to looking after our trees with our Stewardship Team. NYC Parks has worked hard to encourage a culture of caring for trees and actively involve New Yorkers in that process, including partner organizations. We are active participants in the Forests for All coalition and appreciate their advocacy for the Urban Forest Agenda, including the goal to increase New York City's canopy cover to 30%.

Regarding the Parks-specific legislation being heard today, we appreciate the intent behind both bills. NYC Parks is constantly working toward creating a more robust urban forest and recognizes the significance of Int 1065. We look forward to discussing this legislation further with Council and working together to increase tree and vegetation coverage across the five boroughs. Int 1066 would amend the City Charter to require that the role of trees be added to the universe of considerations addressed by the City's sustainability planning mandated by Local Law 84 of 2013. As you've heard today, NYC Parks clearly agrees that our City trees are vital infrastructure providing an incredibly wide array of benefits for New Yorkers, and we've worked closely with the Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice as they have led the City's sustainability planning efforts. They're here in attendance with us today, and we'll defer to them to formally comment on the legislation.

We again want to acknowledge the continued support of the Council, which has generously helped provide dedicated funding for tree guards, tree planting, and tree-related sidewalk repair. We also want to recognize the advocacy of the Forest for All Coalition and the Play Fair Coalition, which led to funding which has contributed directly to the previously mentioned Forest Management Framework and other important investments in tree planting and tree care. I thank you for the opportunity to allow me to testify here today and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

**Committee on Parks and Recreation
Oversight Hearing - Improving the City's Tree Canopy**

June 13, 2023

I'm Chrissy Word, Education Director for City Parks Foundation. As members of Forest for All NYC, we care about the city's urban forest because we are acutely aware of the essential benefits for all living beings that trees provide us. In addition to the vast environmental benefits trees have for our city -- filtering air, sequestering carbon, absorbing stormwater, and supporting wildlife habitats -- trees also provide vital connections for people to the natural world, which can help improve mental health. Time spent in forests reduces stress, lowers blood pressure, decreases anxiety and depression, and strengthens our immune systems. We also know that neighborhoods with plenty of healthy trees experience higher real estate values and lower crime rates. Yet New York City, one of the wealthiest cities in the world, lags in many areas in its canopy cover and general care for trees. We believe the City needs to set a goal of at least 30% canopy cover by 2035. To help reach this goal, we support the City Council's legislation to create a master urban forestry plan and ask the city to provide the funding needed for NYC Parks to support this program in collaboration with sister agencies.

Through our environmental education and community-building programs, we have worked with thousands of youth and adults to assist in providing access to our City's parks. Our community-building programs, including Partnerships for Parks, build and support a network of people who help care for their trees and their local green spaces throughout the city, while our school-based youth programs include curricula about trees and their ecosystem services. Our Green Girls program, in particular, integrates deep education about trees and tree stewardship through the lens of environmental justice. Our students surveyed over 300 trees during the last Trees Count community survey and are preparing for the next one. They have assisted in protecting hundreds of trees in their neighborhoods and parks through tree pit improvement, invasive plant removal, and advocacy campaigns to reduce litter.

These many stewardship opportunities are more than just community service - caring for trees while learning about the ecosystem services they provide to us and to our city results in more New Yorkers becoming advocates for their neighborhoods and for our environment. Participants truly come to understand that trees are our living partners.

We could not do any of this work without NYC Parks, the agency that plays a vital role in managing the urban forest. However, nearly half of our tree canopy falls outside of NYC Parks' purview, and isn't well protected, managed, or planned for. Our city's canopy needs protection, a plan, and investment in management and expansion. This is why City Parks Foundation recently requested federal support from the US Department of Agriculture to fund small grants to communities across the city that are most in need and that wish to undertake improvements to our city's tree canopy, and why we are very supportive of the council's proposed legislation to improve planning and strategy.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony a. We appreciate your efforts to build legislative and budgetary momentum for this vital element of our city.

**Testimony for the NYC Council Committee on Parks and Recreation
Emily Nobel Maxwell, Cities Director, The Nature Conservancy, New York
June 13, 2023**

My name is Emily Nobel Maxwell and I am the 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 help convene the [Forest for All NYC Coalition](#) and we are leading practitioners on the science and policy of the urban forest. In 2021 we released 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, to testify in support of Int. 1065-2023 and Int. 1066-2023. I want express deep gratitude to City Council, and especially the Committee Chair and the sponsors of these bills, for their leadership in advancing important legislation to monitor, protect and grow the New York City tree canopy to 30 percent cover in an equitable way. Tree canopy, vegetation cover, and green space are crucial for the health, safety, and livability of NYC. As our city faces [significant increases in the number and intensity of heat waves](#) and extreme precipitation events in the coming decades, trees, green spaces, and bioswales, when adequately maintained, offer critical nature-based solutions that mitigate the urban heat island effect and stormwater flooding. These bills will help protect the health and well-being of New Yorkers and are also essential to meeting the PlaNYC 30% citywide canopy goal recently announced by Mayor Adams.

We are proud to support these two bills and are encouraged see that City Council shares the vision of the Administration and of the Forest for All NYC Coalition of a larger, healthier, and more equitable NYC urban forest. We unequivocally support Int. 1066-2023, which would require the Office of Long-Term Planning and Sustainability to consider the role of trees, tree canopy, and vegetation in its long-term planning efforts. We also enthusiastically support Int. 1065-2023, which requires the creation of an Urban Forest Plan aimed at protecting and increasing the City's urban forest to 30% cover and the periodic collection of LiDAR data to track canopy. We wholeheartedly applaud the intent and scope of Int. 1065; and we see a few specific opportunities to strengthen the bill to ensure its intent is fulfilled.

First, we encourage City Council to require that the Urban Forest Plan address environmental justice, climate change adaptation and mitigation, equitable canopy access, and workforce development, and account for the whole lifecycle of trees from seed to salvage. These important elements will help align this bill with broader long-term climate and equity goals of NYC and New York State. We also recommend adding a timeline for achieving the 30% canopy cover goal, aligning with the NYC Urban Forest Agenda target of 2035 which has been endorsed by all five borough presidents, 28 City Council Members, and many Community Boards, as well as the members of Forest for All NYC.

Contact:

Emily Nobel Maxwell
Cities Director | The Nature Conservancy
212-381-2185 | emaxwell@tnc.org

We also recommend assigning multi-jurisdictional, interagency leadership for the development of the Urban Forest Plan. The Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) will be an essential partner in providing thought leadership, technical expertise, and management experience and acumen to the development of the plan, but the NYC urban forest extends beyond DPR's jurisdiction, encompassing privately-owned commercial and residential trees, as well as trees owned and managed by other public agencies. Interagency, cross-jurisdictional leadership, as well as leadership from the Mayor's Office, are essential to the success of the plan and we'd support a range of solutions to achieve this. We also encourage the City to ensure sufficient resourcing for developing and implementing the plan.

Today, NYC currently lacks a coordinated, long-term citywide plan (encompassing both public and private land) to care for the whole of the urban forest. Public funding dedicated to trees is insufficient and heavily reliant on temporal government initiatives. There are complicated, piecemeal, and inadequate policies that dictate how and where trees are located, regulated, and managed in NYC, alongside a constellation of different landowners bearing responsibility for trees. Yet, we have some strong building blocks, most notably the leadership and expertise of DPR and a broad range of stewardship groups and institutions across the city. We need a unifying, thoughtful, ambitious, and lasting vision and roadmap that ensures the urban forest's longevity to support and expand its myriad benefits for New Yorkers, and we are grateful to this Committee for working to address this issue.

We commend this Committee, and City Council, for acknowledging our urban forest as an issue worthy of such significant consideration. Last year's first-ever oversight hearing on tree canopy set the stage for where we are today. I am buoyed 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.

The significant and broad support these bills, and the urban forest, enjoy must be underscored. In a poll The Nature Conservancy commissioned by Global Strategy Group in late 2022, New York City voters overwhelmingly said (97%) they would support efforts to protect, maintain, and expand the NYC urban forest. The diverse members of Forest for All NYC support these bills, with approximately 40 submitting supportive testimony today under that collective banner and on behalf of their own organizations.

Thank you again to the Committee on Parks and Recreation, the Chairman, and the bill sponsors for your leadership in working to codify the role of the urban forest as critical infrastructure that improves the lives of New Yorkers. We would be proud to continue to work alongside you to help realize the greatest positive impact from these bills. We will follow up with specific suggested edits to Int. 1065 which we believe will help guide the bill to its maximum potential for success and impact that we all collectively aim to achieve. We also share a primer on the NYC urban forest below and have copies of the NYC Urban Forest Agenda available for your edification.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your continued commitment to protecting NYC's urban forest. The Nature Conservancy is pleased to make ourselves available to advance this important discussion.

The Nature Conservancy is a public charity and cannot and does not take positions on political parties or candidates for public office.

Contact:

Emily Nobel Maxwell
Cities Director | The Nature Conservancy
212-381-2185 | emaxwell@tnc.org

The State of the NYC 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, community cohesion, climate resilience, and as monuments or cultural symbols, and achieving the visionary goal of 30x35 will increase its benefits and offers the potential to provide them more equitably to New Yorkers. (See Ch. 4 of SUFNYC). While many benefits are difficult to measure or value economically, [research published in 2018 by the US Department of Agriculture \(USDA\) Forest Service](#) for the urban forest as a whole, and [released by NYC Parks based on the 2015 street tree census](#), 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 [2022 New York City Heat-Related Mortality Report](#), an average of 370 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 ($\geq 1"$), 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. While past City programs such as Trees for Public Health and Cool Neighborhoods NYC targeted investments for planting in some such areas, there remain major disparities in the canopy cover among neighborhoods. 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.

The existing urban forest in NYC is generally healthy, and citywide its canopy had a small net increase, from just over 20% in 2010 to 22% in 2017. As part of this trend, there have been increases in street trees from 1995-2015. But these changes varied across the city. Some neighborhoods experienced greater increases than others, and some even lost

Contact:

Emily Nobel Maxwell
Cities Director | The Nature Conservancy
212-381-2185 | emaxwell@tnc.org

canopy or had periodic losses in street trees. The urban forest is composed of a rich variety of trees, with almost 300 different kinds (identified to genus, species, or variety) in landscaped portions of City Parkland, and in general, there is a trend toward reduced dominance of any individual kind, which can make the resource more resilient to factors such as pests and disease. However, invasive species pose threats to the integrity of the resource, particularly for forested natural areas, and require persistent, ongoing management, as detailed in the [Forest Management Framework for New York City](#) from NYC Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) and the Natural Areas Conservancy. The inventoried trees also exhibit a generally healthy age and size structure, with more smaller trees that can replace older ones as they are felled or die and require removal. Additional details status and dynamics of the trees and their canopy are available in Ch. 2 of SUFNYC.

The potential benefits of the urban forest cannot be fully realized without sufficient commitment to DPR operations and maintenance as well as ongoing capital investments in planting and restoration. 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 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 of the most recent (2015-2016) street tree census, there was space for an estimated 250,000 more trees to be planted along NYC streets. In addition to limited funding, the urban forest also suffers from inconsistent funding, and is vulnerable to drastic cuts. Between FY20 and FY21, when the City's OTPS expense budget was reduced by 6.2%, DPR's forestry budget was cut by 85% (from \$17.4 million, adjusted for inflation to 2021 dollars, to \$2.6 million). While the budget was restored in FY22, these funding fluctuations interrupt cycles of regular tree maintenance and long-term planning that are essential to a long-lasting, healthy urban forest, and the budget remains uncertain for the coming year. Despite the laudable efforts of this Committee and hundreds of advocacy groups across the city, DPR remains underfunded in spite of managing, caring for and programming, approximately 14% of NYC's land and over half of tree canopy in the city.

While funding is insufficient, so is the policy and management framework for the urban forest. Trees under the jurisdiction of DPR are afforded routine management and some protections, primarily replacement requirements if removed, but trees in other property types, nearly 47 percent of the canopy in the city, are generally not. This canopy crosses jurisdiction, owner, and property type. There are some examples of institutions with exceptional management practices – e.g., The Green-Wood Cemetery, botanical gardens, and some State and Federal agencies have active management of the relatively small portions of the urban forest under their control (see Ch. 7 of SUFNYC). But, most owners and managers have no documented management practices suggesting that vast portions of the urban forest may be un- or under-managed. Importantly, 35% of all canopy in NYC is on private property and just over half of that is on 1-2 family residential properties. Except for select Special Purpose zoning districts in a few select areas in the city, there are no protections for the urban forest in these realms (see Ch. 5 of SUFNYC). This means that substantial portion of the urban forest is susceptible to outright removal with no replacement requirements. As such, there is tremendous potential for incentives and regulations to help maintain and increase the urban forest on private property.

Contact:

Emily Nobel Maxwell
Cities Director | The Nature Conservancy
212-381-2185 | emaxwell@tnc.org

Existing protections could be strengthened, and they could be further expanded to cover all property types, such as by extending the protections for trees within the jurisdiction of DPR more broadly (e.g., across all City agencies), adapting tree protection rules associated with certain Special Purpose zoning districts (e.g., the Special Natural Area District; see Ch. 5 of SUFNYC) to fit other parts of the city, and considering enacting policies that have been effective elsewhere that may better protect the urban forest and its benefits.

New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) is a 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. As such, protecting and maintaining NYCHA's trees is vital, and there is also proving to be ample room for new tree planting on NYCHA properties, and given the somewhat homogenous, older age of trees there, planting younger, successional trees there will be crucial for maintaining and expanding the total canopy. Much of this was detailed in a [2021 NYCHA report](#) about the urban forest on their properties based a partial inventory, largely conducted in collaboration with Green City Force who employed local residents, which illustrates just some of the value that monitoring of the resource holds for managing it effectively. Investments to complete the NYCHA tree inventory and create and implement a systemwide management plan are important next steps.

Expanding the canopy equitably means protecting and maintaining that which we have, and strategically adding more — all of which require both paid and volunteer labor. As described in [Opportunities for Growth: Nature-Based Jobs in New York City](#), investing in nature-based jobs, such as City Park Workers, Tree Climbers and Pruners, can play both a crucial role in providing safe and healthy employment for New Yorkers and in enhancing NYC parks and the urban forest to improve quality of life during and after the pandemic. Stewardship groups also play a crucial role in maintaining trees in the city, ranging from Citizen Pruners who care for street trees and volunteers who maintain trails in natural areas to the myriad park conservancies and block associations who tend the canopy across a wide variety of neighborhoods and land types. These groups need ongoing resources to ensure that they can thrive alongside and in service of the urban forest. There are substantial opportunities to expand the urban forest in New York City, supporting broader realization of its benefits. Our recent work to understand potential to increase canopy in NYC suggests that while accounting for conflicting land uses and the built environment, the city's canopy could be nearly doubled by planting trees and nurturing their growth, so long as we also maintain the existing trees we have today. Much of this opportunity is on private property — particularly 1-2 family residential — and suggests a need for both rules and incentives for property owners to both maintain and add trees to their properties.

To attain a more equitable distribution of the urban forest, and to ensure benefits are realized where they are most needed, such as more heat vulnerable communities, it is critical to find additional ways to expand the resource. The City should ensure street trees are planted to capacity, while also working with communities to identify opportunities

Contact:

Emily Nobel Maxwell
Cities Director | The Nature Conservancy
212-381-2185 | emaxwell@tnc.org

for streetscape redesign, and redevelopment and rezoning, all of which can be tailored to expand opportunities for trees and canopy. This is particularly important in spaces that are more heavily built. And of note, it is critical that local communities are actively involved from the outset— particularly to help minimize gentrification or other unintended consequences that may accompany investments.

To improve the urban forest, we need to regularly monitor and track it. Characterizing and tracking the extent and distribution of the urban forest is both facilitated and limited by available data. The most recent, holistic dataset for it represents tree canopy and tree canopy change across 2010 and 2017 (available on the [NYC Open Data Portal](#)); thus, our collective understanding of it is already five years out of date. This dataset is incredibly accurate and provides a detailed picture of the landscape, as it is based on analysis of both three-dimensional LiDAR data and aerial imagery, and overcomes limits of past datasets in terms of tracking change through time. To continue to track change over time and support adaptive management of the urban forest, the City needs to ensure continued collection of comparable aerial imagery (4-band, 6-inch resolution with true ortho rectification) and commit to commissioning both collection of LiDAR data and derivation of land cover and tree canopy data products from the imagery and LiDAR data no less than every 5 years. There have also been decadal street tree censuses (most recently in 2015-2016), as well as a single inventory of landscaped park trees (2017-2018) and an ecological assessment of natural areas in City Parkland completed nearly 10 years ago. However, again, there are no ongoing funding or other commitments from the City to ensure these are updated to enable tracking of changes through time. Importantly, urban forest data can have broader uses, such as in understanding heat vulnerability, as employed in the calculation of the [Heat Vulnerability Index](#) by the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

Contact:

Emily Nobel Maxwell
Cities Director | The Nature Conservancy
212-381-2185 | emaxwell@tnc.org



New York City Council

**Oversight Hearing: The State of the City's Tree Canopy – Committee on Parks and Recreation
June 13, 2023**

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 of the Natural Areas Conservancy. Thank you to the Chair and the members of the Committee on Parks and Recreation for the opportunity to speak today.

We thank the Council for proposing Intros 1065 and 1066. As a proud member of the leadership committee of the Forest for All NYC Coalition, the Natural Areas Conservancy is in support of efforts to expand the canopy coverage of our urban forest to 30% of New York City's land by 2035.

We support the intent of Intro 1065, and offer the following points of feedback for consideration on the bill:

Urgent protection is needed for our existing urban canopy, particularly our forested natural areas. Of the 7 million trees currently in NYC, approximately 5 million are located within forested natural areas. It is worth noting that these 5 million trees store almost 70% of the city's carbon, providing an outsized level of value relative to other portions of our urban canopy. We appreciate that the bill explicitly calls out the need to "protect, care for, and expand the city's urban forest canopy", and ask that the Council and the Administration properly allocate the funds necessary to care for the existing canopy of our forested natural areas, which have received an annual average of 0.7% of the NYC Parks expense budget for care, despite comprising 24% of the city's parkland portfolio. Funding for our natural forested areas has been stagnant for years, and we run the very real risk of losing swaths of our natural forested areas if we continue this level of disinvestment.

We believe the success of the Urban Forest Plan rests on the ability of the public to have high quality access to the urban forest itself. The Mayor recently allocated funding in the FY24 Executive Budget to improve and promote the use of 300 miles of nature trails in our city's parks. This funding presents a very real opportunity to bring more New Yorkers into our invaluable forested natural areas. While we celebrate this new funding for trails, it is critically important that the FY24 budget include funding for parks and the urban forest, including \$3.5 million to continue the work of caring for our forested natural areas, and for the city to baseline this essential funding in future budget cycles.

We believe this plan should not be the exclusive responsibility of NYC Parks. The agency has vital expertise and guidance to share with the city about how to properly expand and care for our urban forest, which will be a critical part of the proposed plan. However only 53% of NYC's urban canopy falls under the jurisdiction of NYC Parks, with 47% of the remaining canopy falling on land belonging to other city agencies or private property owners. We recommend that the Urban Forest Plan be completed in tandem between another Mayoral agency (such as the Department of City Planning or the Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice) and NYC Parks. We



believe an interagency partnership on this issue would help elevate its importance, and the success of its implementation, particularly as it relates to the expansion of our urban canopy onto private property.

The Urban Forest Plan should be intentional about including considerations of environmental justice, climate change, and workforce development. We have long known that the current gaps in our urban canopy exist in communities citywide that have been subject to historic redlining and discrimination. These neighborhoods remain our most vulnerable with respect to climate change, and stand to benefit the most from a targeted expansion of our urban forest. We also believe that the expansion of the urban forest represents an opportunity to create reliable and quality green jobs for New Yorkers.

We believe the proposed timeline of the Urban Forest Plan being submitted by July 31, 2024 is aggressive, and recommend that an interim status report be submitted by this date, with the final plan being delivered by June, 2025. We also encourage the Council to support the goals outlined in the Forest For All NYC Urban Forest Agenda, and to include a target date of achieving our urban canopy goals by 2035. A timeline will help to ensure that the City moves forward with intention and clarity.

This legislation is an exciting opportunity to contemplate the entire life cycle of our urban forest and the multitude of benefits to New Yorkers.

Thank you again for your leadership and for the opportunity to testify today.





BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Bette Midler, *Founder*
Helena Durst, *Co-chair*
Darcy Stacom, *Co-chair*
Vered Rabia, *President*
Erhard Marius, *Treasurer*

Samuel Ashner
Krystyna Blakeslee
Heather Butts
Betty Y. Chen
Todd DeGarmo, *FAIA*
Susan Donoghue, *Ex Officio*
Edmund D. Hollander, *FASLA*
Walter Hood
Michael Kors
Michael Lorber
James L. Nederlander
Benjamin F. Needell, *Esq.*
Kelebohile Nkhereanye
Janice Parker, *ASLA, Ex Officio*
David Rockwell, *FAIA*
Joshua Sirefman
Sophie von Haselberg
Miriam Wheeler
Shelly Malkin, *Emeritus*
Jann S. Wenner, *Emeritus*
Ann Ziff, *Emeritus*

CHAIRMAN'S COUNCIL

Janice Parker, *ASLA, Chair*
Charles Bendit
Adrian Benepe
Noble Black
Diane Brownstone
Alexandra Cohen
Sophie Coquillette Koven
Douglas Durst
Amy Goldman Fowler
Tim Gunn
Mychal Johnson
Jakob Levison
Rob Light
Margo MacNabb Nederlander
Joshua Rider
Paul D. Selver
Andrea Woodner

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Lynn B. Kelly

New York Restoration Project

Testimony before New York City Council,
Committee on Parks and Recreation Oversight
Hearing on The State of the City's Tree Canopy
6/13/2022

Good afternoon. My name is Lynn Kelly, and I am the Executive Director of the New York Restoration Project (NYRP). Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony this afternoon, Chair Krishnan. NYRP is a proud member of the Forest For All NYC coalition, the Play Fair Coalition and a founding member of Parks and Open Space Partners. I am here today in support of the two pieces of legislation up for discussion: Intro 1066 would require the Office of Long-term Planning and Sustainability to consider the role of trees, tree canopy, and vegetation in its sustainability planning and Intro 1065 that would require the Department of Parks and Recreation in consultation with other appropriate government authorities to create an Urban Forest Master Plan.

Simply put, NYRP knows trees. For over 26 years, NYRP has planted trees, renovated gardens, restored parks, and transformed open space for communities throughout New York City. NYRP levied the power of public and private partnerships to spearhead and successfully complete MillionTreesNYC with the Parks Department. MillionTreesNYC was a citywide movement that engaged and energized New Yorkers of every background. The millionth tree was planted in October 2015 in The South Bronx, completing this historic effort.

Today, NYRP continues to steward and care for thousands of trees planted during the MillionTreesNYC era. These now mature trees help keep city streets cooler, sequester carbon, and beautify neighborhoods.

Recently, NYRP concluded our popular Free Tree Giveaway drive throughout all five boroughs where we gave away over 3,500



native New York tree species with over 20 partner organizations including elected officials.

We know you are well-aware of the importance trees and the Urban Forest play in fighting the Urban Heat Island Effect, sequestering excess carbon, and absorbing excess rainwater. Last week New York City had the worst air quality out of any major city globally. Extreme weather is now the norm, and the Urban Forest is the first line of defense.

Intro's 1066 and 1065 are the first steps toward ensuring New York City achieves 30 percent canopy coverage by 2035. An Urban Forest Master Plan helps ensure that we have accountability as we consider future budget issues. When creating an Urban Master Plan, the Parks Department must be supported and receive proper resources while being allowed broader jurisdictional authority throughout the planning process. The Parks Department manages 53.5% of the total urban forest canopy in the city. Despite all their efforts, they are still chronically underfunded. Future budgets must baseline 1% for Parks, while also addressing environmental justice, climate change, public health, and equitable access to green space.

Thank you for considering these crucial pieces of legislation.



**New York City Council Committee on Parks and Recreation
Tuesday, June 13, 2023
Committee on Parks and Recreation- Oversight – The State of the City’s Tree Canopy
Sherrise Palomino, Director of Advocacy and Programs**

Good afternoon, my name is Sherrise Palomino, and I am the Director of Advocacy and Programs at New Yorkers for Parks (NY4P). We are members of Forest for All NYC. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. New Yorkers for Parks is a founding member of the Play Fair Coalition that advocates for parks and open space and includes over 400 organizations. I also want to thank Chair Krishnan for his leadership on the important issue of improving tree canopy.

New Yorkers for Park and the Play Fair coalition support each of the three bills being heard today. These bills will create a NYC urban forest plan, vital tree canopy monitoring and the long overdue consideration of trees in the City’s long-term planning. Passing these bills are good for the urban forest, good for New Yorkers’ health and well-being, and essential to meeting Mayor Adam’s recently announced PlaNYC 30% canopy goal citywide.

We believe the city needs to set a goal of at least 30% canopy cover by 2035. New York can’t wait. We are in the midst of a climate crisis.

NYC’s urban forest plays an important role in climate change mitigation and adaptation. Urban forests capture atmospheric carbon dioxide. Trees help reduce air and water pollution and cooling costs by acting as energy savers. The parks department plays a critical role in managing the urban forest but nearly half is outside of their jurisdiction. The urban forest needs better protection and management. The parks department needs more resources and the whole urban forest needs investment. The city council has an extraordinary opportunity to demand a comprehensive plan that allows for meaningful investments in the management, protection, and expansion of our urban forest. This is possible with the city council making a commitment to allocating 1% of the city budget to NYC Parks.

We are overdue for transformative investment in our parks system – 1% of the city budget for parks could ensure that our urban forest can be resourced to support New York City during this climate crisis. This is one of the many reasons why NY4P and the Play Fair Coalition are calling for a commitment to increase the Parks budget to 1% of the city’s budget – a call that the majority of City Council Members support along with Speaker Adams.

For over 100 years, [New Yorkers for Parks](http://www.ny4p.org) (NY4P) has built, protected, and promoted parks and open spaces in New York City. Today, NY4P is the citywide independent organization championing quality parks and open spaces for all New Yorkers in all neighborhoods. www.ny4p.org

**NYC Council Committee on Parks and Recreation
Improving the City's Tree Canopy- 6.13.2023**

Nick Guntli – Senior Director of Horticulture, The Horticultural Society of New York

INTRO

Good afternoon Chair Krishnan and Members of the Council, and thank you for holding today's important hearing on improving the city's tree canopy. Thank you to Council Members Gale Brewer and Erik Bottcher not only for introducing these bills today but also for consistently supporting the Hort's greening efforts. My name is Nick Guntli and I am the Senior Director of Horticulture at the Horticultural Society of New York. As a service provider with 120 years of experience tending to New York City's natural environment, The Hort would like to advocate for expanding and supporting our vital urban tree canopy.

OUR ROLE

Our mission at The Hort is to improve human life through horticulture. For most New Yorkers, contact with nature happens on the go: in planters, tree pits, and other small "in-between" areas, incidental or planned, that provide access to the earth. The Hort plants these in-betweens, even those considered "unplantable". We believe that these small planted spaces add up to provide city dwellers with the people-plant connection essential for a healthy society. At the Hort, we work in more than 350 jobsites in low to medium income communities across the five boroughs. We cultivate and maintain more than 1100 trees and tree pits. Our crews provide water, remove weeds and waste, lay down mulch, and install plantings, in order to sustain the holistic health of our urban forest. We plant trees, as well as install tree guards, in many of these pits to help promote the health of our city's tree canopy. As the number of trees in NYC continues to grow, we all need to advocate for tree health from the ground up.

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

As we saw last week, people tend to take clean air for granted until we don't have it. Clean air is essential for all New Yorkers. More trees means cleaner air. The tree canopy absorbs airborne pollutants, sequesters carbon dioxide, and intercepts particulate matter. There are innumerable other environmental benefits our urban forest provides as well: it provides shade, diminishes the heat island effect, and naturally cools the air through the process of transpiration. On the ground, tree pits are mini reservoirs, helping to manage stormwater runoff. A healthy tree canopy will work to mitigate the effects of climate change on New Yorkers and their neighborhoods.

PSYCHOSOCIAL BENEFITS

We all know how much our tree canopy nurtures physical and mental health. As an organization that has pioneered and advanced the field of horticultural therapy for 30 years, The Hort has directly observed the psychosocial benefits that trees and plants bring to communities. Access to nature reduces stress, as measured by reduced heart rate and blood pressure. In addition, green spaces offer cultural gathering places, oases for contemplation, and powerful analogies of growth and endurance that can be applied to human life. Trees and plants help activate our city, making neighborhoods safer by bringing people together on tree-lined streets and providing economic benefits through increased business activity on commercial corridors.

CONCLUSION

In addition to its environmental, social, and economic benefits I have discussed, there are many benefits of the urban tree canopy still being discovered, such as providing a habitat for wildlife and serving as an essential ecological pathway for pollinators and birds. Our tree canopy nourishes a more resilient, vital, and healthy New York, and we strongly believe in the need to bolster the quantity of trees and the quality of their care. We all benefit from this increased connection with nature in our city. We know this benefit is recognized by New Yorkers, because people always thank us when they see us bring plants and trees into their community. Thank you for allowing us to give our testimony as you discuss bills to increase our urban tree canopy and codify its importance in our city's planning practices.



Thursday, June 15, 2023

Committee on Parks and Recreation
 New York City Council
 City Hall
 New York, NY

71 WEST 23RD ST
 SUITE 1523
 NEW YORK, NY 10010
 212.691.7483

NYCAUDUBON.ORG



Testimony in support of Int 1066-2023 and Int 1065-2023.

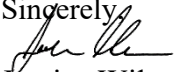
Dear Members of the New York City Council Committee on Parks and Recreation,


As a member of the Forest for All NYC coalition, NYC Audubon, representing over 10,000 members, is deeply committed to justly and equitably protecting, maintaining, expanding, and promoting the NYC urban forest. We thank the City Council for your leadership in advancing important legislation to monitor, protect and grow the NYC tree canopy in an equitable way. This legislation directly advances the NYC Urban Forest Agenda.

Each spring and fall, millions of migratory birds pass through New York City. These birds stop in NYC just briefly to forage, requiring green space to fuel their epic journeys between breeding and wintering grounds. These migratory birds, traveling from as far as Alaska to the Amazon rain forest, struggle to survive their brief stay in New York City due to a hazardous landscape of glass and concrete, with limited urban forest. Int 1066 and 1065 of 2023 will create a NYC urban forest plan, establish canopy monitoring, and incorporate the long overdue consideration of trees in the City's long-term planning, all aspects important for the success of migratory birds.

The NYC urban forest plays a vital role in providing habitat for birds, open space, offsetting the impacts of climate change, and promoting biodiversity. Long term planning and monitoring are important to fulfill the urban forest's potential, meet the PlaNYC 30% canopy goals, and serve all New Yorkers equitably.

As an organization dedicated to the conservation of wild birds and their habitat in New York City, we thank the City Council for advancing this important legislation to enhance the urban forest.

Sincerely,

 Jessica Wilson
 Executive Director, NYC Audubon


 Dustin Partridge, PhD
 Director of Conservation and Science



New York City Environmental Justice Alliance Testimony to NYC City Council Committee on Parks and Recreation (in support of Intro 1065 and Intro 1066)

June 13, 2023

Good afternoon Chair Krishnan and members of the Council. My name is Victoria Sanders and I'm testifying on behalf of the New York City Environmental Justice Alliance (NYC-EJA), which is a citywide membership network linking grassroots organizations from low-income communities of color in their struggle for environmental justice. NYC-EJA empowers its member organizations to advocate for improved environmental conditions and against inequitable environmental burdens by the coordination of campaigns to inform City and State policies. Through our efforts, member organizations coalesce around specific common issues that threaten the ability for low-income communities of color to thrive.

As a major proponent of creative and multifaceted green infrastructure solutions for mitigating both flooding and heat risks in NYC's most environmentally burdened communities, NYC-EJA supports both Intro 1065 and Intro 1066. With scientists and researchers predicting warmer summer temperatures in the years ahead, we must look to more nature-based solutions that are equitably implemented to address the severe conditions that lay ahead. Each summer, an estimated 370 New Yorkers die prematurely because of extreme heat in New York City. Black New Yorkers are more likely to die from heat stress, with death rates two times higher than among white New Yorkers. In addition, Black and Brown communities in New York have access to [33 percent less](#) park space than residents in largely white neighborhoods. The disproportionate heat burden and risks that environmental justice and frontline communities experience due to the lack of trees and green space, increased pavement, and air pollution underscores the significance of and need for green infrastructure in these neighborhoods.

While we are very supportive of the intention of Intro 1065, we believe that the efficacy can be strengthened by improving the language with a few key additions and caveats. Intro 1065 covers many key points in relation to the need for an citywide urban forest plan and reaching 30% canopy cover in NYC, but the critical component of equity is not currently reflected in the bill language. For example, an authentic equity analysis should prioritize expanding canopy cover, among other things, in EJ/Black & Brown communities first. In order for these plans to be beneficial to those New Yorkers that most need them, the bill should specifically address equity and outline its importance in the plan and execution of 30% canopy cover distribution.

Investments to manage, protect and expand the urban forest canopy are crucial to providing more equitable access to the urban forest's benefits - from shade and cooling to mental health,

particularly in the most heat vulnerable and frontline communities. To ensure that an effective Urban Forest Plan is both drafted and implemented, there needs to be adequate funding dedicated to the Parks and Recreation Department. Without an appropriate and dependable budget allocated to the urban forest and its expansion, maintenance, and protection, these bills will be unable to meet the goals they outline.

In addition, the 30% canopy cover goal must be tied to a firm timeline. As a member of the Forest for All NYC Coalition, NYC-EJA aligns with the coalition's goal of equitably reaching 30% tree canopy cover by **2035**.

And finally, as outlined in Section 1c of the bill, we feel that the following list of agencies, though not comprehensive, should be involved in the execution of Intro 1065: Department of Parks and Recreation, Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice, Department of Environmental Protection, Department of City Planning, and New York City Housing Authority. Though we know there are likely other agencies that will be important in this process, we feel that these five agencies should certainly be included to work together and ensure this legislation is implemented effectively.

It's time that New Yorkers living in communities without sufficient parks and green space have increased nature-based public investment and greater access to the benefits of our urban forest. Now is the moment for New York's leaders to advance the investments and policies needed to protect, maintain, and most importantly grow the urban forest – with a focus on environmental justice communities. Thank you for the time and opportunity to testify.



**Testimony of Alia Soomro, Deputy Director for New York City Policy
New York League of Conservation Voters
City Council Committee on Parks and Recreation
Oversight Hearing on the State of the City's Tree Canopy
June 13, 2023**

Good morning, my name is Alia Soomro and I am the Deputy Director for New York City Policy at the New York League of Conservation Voters (NYLCV). NYLCV is a statewide environmental advocacy organization representing over 30,000 members in New York City. Thank you, Chair Krishnan and members of the Committee on Parks and Recreation for the opportunity to testify today.

NYLCV is a member of Forest for All NYC (FFANYC), a diverse coalition of over ninety organizations collaborating to support the City's urban forest and equitably achieve 30% tree canopy cover by 2035. We are a member of FFANYC not only because trees and vegetation help mitigate a variety of environmental and public health challenges—including fighting air pollution, reducing carbon emissions, and improving stormwater runoff and the urban heat island effect—but because FFANYC centers equity and environmental justice in its advocacy. Recognizing that parks, green spaces, and trees are not equitably distributed due to structural racism and historic disinvestment, FFANYC's advocacy promotes New York City's urban forest so that it benefits all New Yorkers in a way that is just and equitable.

NYLCV supports both bills being considered today because they directly advance the goals outlined in the [NYC Urban Forest Agenda. Intro 1065-2023](#), sponsored by Council Member Bottcher, would require NYC Parks to create an Urban Forest Master Plan aimed at protecting and increasing the City's urban forest. [Intro 1066-2023](#), sponsored by Council Member Brewer, would require the office of long-term planning and sustainability to consider the role of trees, tree canopy, and vegetation in its long-term sustainability planning. Passing these bills are good for the urban forest, good for New Yorkers' health and well-being, and essential to meeting Mayor Adam's recently announced PlaNYC 30% tree canopy goal.

While we support [Intro 1065-2023](#), we offer the following suggestions:

1. The legislation should ensure NYC Parks is supported and resourced in planning the Urban Forest Master Plan either by listing other City agencies with broader jurisdiction as a co-lead(s) (such as DCP, DEP, NYCHA), or by establishing an interagency and/or public-private task force. This will help NYC Parks develop a comprehensive and holistic Plan that covers places beyond NYC Parks jurisdiction.

2. The legislation should establish a timeline for achieving 30 percent cover, ideally by 2035. This will help the City set specific shorter-term goals and improve transparency and accountability.
3. As mentioned previously, [research](#) has shown the [links](#) between neighborhoods that were previously redlined with higher temperatures and [fewer trees](#). The legislation language and Plan should explicitly account for and set out to improve equity and environmental justice, climate change, public health, tree and vegetation access, workforce development, and more.

Lastly, given the City's approaching budget negotiation deadline, we would be remiss if we did not connect the goals of Forest for All NYC with the need for more parks funding. As co-founders of the Play Fair for Parks Coalition, we urge the City Council and Adams Administration to increase the NYC Parks budget to at least 1% of the City budget. While NYC Parks manages 53.5% of the total urban forest canopy in the City, it is slated to receive less than 0.6% of the City budget. Despite its laudable efforts, our parks system is chronically underfunded, particularly for management of the urban forest. NYC Parks needs baselined and sufficient investment in the regular maintenance of the urban forest if the goals of these bills are to be achieved.

With the recent introduction of these two bills and the Mayor's inclusion of a 30% canopy goal in the recently-released PlaNYC, NYLCV believes that the time is right to prioritize Forest for All NYC's goals. NYLCV appreciates the City Council's leadership in advancing this important legislation to monitor, protect, and grow the City's tree canopy in an equitable way, and we look forward to working with Forest for All NYC, City Council, and the Adams Administration to support our City's urban forest.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

Testimony for the NYC Council Committee on Parks and Recreation



Dear Chairperson Krishnan,

Thank you for your leadership by holding a hearing on these important pieces of legislation. I write today on behalf of the Brooklyn Botanic Garden (BBG) to voice our full support for Int 1065-2023 and Int 1066-2023.

BBG is a proud member of the Forrest for All NYC coalition. The coalition works to advance the NYC Urban Forrest Agenda and ensure that New Yorkers are educated on the importance of the urban forest. As part of this work, BBG has made the urban forest the centerpiece of our work in 2023. This week we will be launching a six-month exhibit called "Power of Trees". This exhibit focuses on how trees are at the center of our ecosystem and help safeguard us from the effects of climate change. Through art and science exhibitions, tours, family programs, and special events, "Power of Trees" looks at these remarkable plants from various perspectives to help visitors understand, appreciate, and advocate for the trees in their lives.

These pieces of legislation are an important part of advancing the health of our urban forest and are a critical part of our city's fight to mitigate the effects of climate change. Engaging in nature-based planning will allow our city to be more resilient in the face of increasingly common coastal storms and severe weather events, mitigate the impacts of the urban heat island effect, and make New York City a safer and more livable city.

In recent years, BBG has begun a long-term project to create a management plan for the small part of the NYC urban forest we care for on our 52-acre campus. The data we have gathered on our trees has proved to be an invaluable asset and will guide us in the long-term care of our collection. We are confident that the creation of Urban Forest Master plan at the city level will have a similar positive effect and allow NYC to have a more robust and healthier tree canopy that can be enjoyed by future generations. We also encourage the Council to ensure that NYC Parks has the resources needed to execute this important work and that this plan takes into account environmental justice, climate change, health access, workforce development, and the full life cycle of trees.

Thank you again for the opportunity to submit testimony on these important pieces of legislation.

Sincerely,

Ethan Lustig-Elgrably
Director of Government Affairs
Brooklyn Botanic Garden



June 16, 2023

Founders

Vernice Miller-Travis
Peggy M. Shepard
Chuck Sutton

Board of Directors

Chair

Jeff Jones

Secretary

Nancy E. Anderson, Ph.D.

Treasurer

Ken P. Mak

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

Executive Director

Peggy M. Shepard

Testimony of WE ACT for Environmental Justice

To the New York City Council Committee on Parks and Recreation

Regarding the The State of the City's Tree Canopy

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

WE ACT for Environmental Justice, an organization based in Harlem, has been fighting environmental racism at the city, state, and federal levels for more than 30 years. We recognize and fight to remedy the negative cumulative impacts of unjust policies that have plagued communities of color for decades.

WE ACT is asking the City Council to codify a holistic, coordinated, and equitable approach to securing a future for New York City's urban canopy.

Without any legislation to ensure trees and other vegetation are treated as vital infrastructure, from one administration to the next, NYC residents in need of environmental services are at constant risk of being underserved. Last year, [all five Borough Presidents had to join forces](#) in support of expanding New York's tree cover to 30% by 2035, a goal put forward by the [NYC Urban Forest Agenda](#) to prompt urgent action from the Adams Administration. Despite this united front, the Preliminary Mayor's Management Report shows that the city is lagging behind with regard to critical indicators for tree planting and maintenance. In the first four months of the fiscal year, the Department of Parks and Recreation failed to keep up with last year's tree planting pace, with [45% fewer trees planted within the same time period](#). While there are several factors influencing this underperformance, this is due in large part to Parks receiving substantially less than 1% of the City's operating budget despite Mayor Adam's campaign promise.

This is why legislation like **Introduction 1066** proves to be necessary. The bill requires the Office of Long Term Planning and Sustainability to consider the role of trees, tree canopy, and vegetation in its long-term sustainability planning, reinforcing and contextualizing their value in the long term.



Similarly, **Introduction 1065** facilitates interagency coordination across city, state, and non-governmental stakeholders to ensure the creation of an integrated Urban Forest Master Plan. The legislation has provisions to reach an urban canopy coverage goal of 30%, establish metrics to expand and protect the urban forest, and to require the collection of LIDaR data to monitor effectiveness of the plan. Additionally, the plan would be updated every 10 years.

While Introduction 1065 significantly improves cooperation and management toward a thriving urban forest, there are key amendments WE ACT would like to see added to this bill such as:

1. Adequate funding for the Department of Parks and Recreation
2. A timeline for achieving 30 percent cover no later than 2035
3. Criteria to prioritize environmental justice, climate change, health, access, and workforce development for Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA) disadvantaged communities with high heat vulnerability index scores
4. Accounts for the distinct needs of trees at various points in their lifespans, including wood salvaging when trees are lost due to disease or natural disasters

Even though we have been successful alongside over 90 member organizations of Forest For All NYC in advocating for the 30% canopy cover by 2035 to be included in PlaNYC, your support as City Council members in this committee will provide much needed reinforcement.

Parks and green spaces are some of New York City’s most valuable environmental assets. Trees, grass, and vegetation combat the [urban heat island effect](#), which is caused by structures such as buildings, roads, and other hard infrastructure in urban areas that trap heat in warm months, creating “islands” of higher temperatures compared with outlying areas. Urban heat islands also intensify extreme heat waves, harming more people in cities than any other weather-related events. Furthermore, [studies show](#) formerly redlined neighborhoods are today an average of five degrees hotter in the summer than non-redlined areas due to less tree coverage and access to parks.

Trees and plants [lower surface and air temperatures](#) by providing shade and through evapotranspiration. Trees in cities also [prevent approximately 1,200 heat-related deaths](#) and countless heat-related illnesses each year. They also clean our air and act as a carbon sink, fighting climate change



and filtering out harmful pollutants by [removing an estimated 711,000 metric tons of air pollution annually and absorbing more than 90 million metric tons of carbon](#).

Additionally, as hurricanes, severe rainfall, and inland and coastal flooding become more extreme and frequent due to climate change, our parks, open spaces, and wetlands have a vital role to play in stormwater absorption. By capturing stormwater, [parks can reduce runoff by 90% and filter out as much as 95% of major pollutants from water](#). Even beyond immediate physical health benefits, access to parks and green spaces benefits our mental state, reduces stress, and has even shown to improve blood pressure.

This is why the City should invest in building out our urban forests as outlined in the NYC Urban Forest Agenda.

Planting more trees lowers temperatures, reduces carbon emissions by storing carbon and removing pollutants from the atmosphere, and improves public health by reducing heat-related illnesses. As members of the [Forest for All NYC Coalition](#), we believe the City must protect, maintain, expand, and promote the New York City urban forest to benefit all New Yorkers in a way that is just and equitable. The Agenda states, “More socially and heat-vulnerable communities [like East Harlem and the South Bronx] tend to have lower tree canopy cover [...] Higher income communities tended to have more canopy, and areas with higher poverty rates tended to have less” (pg. 80). This must be rectified by building out the urban forest starting in most underserved communities.

We need improved access to parks and greenspaces, in particular in low income neighborhoods and communities of color that are disproportionately impacted by extreme heat and air pollution. Seventeen percent of New Yorkers still live further than walking distance from a park, meaning that we need more parks in communities that historically lack open spaces and the local environmental benefits of a nearby park.

The following investments are recommended:

- **\$3.2 million** for climber and pruner training program – an urban forest workforce development program
- **\$2.7 million** in Fiscal Year 2024 for tree risk management to \$21M over the next four years annually to maintain trees in our streets and parks, which includes inspections, pest management, tracking, and various maintenance work



- **\$3.5 million** annually to care for, steward, and maintain our forested natural areas
- **\$1.2 million** annually to enforce tree preservation and protect trees during permitted development
- **\$9 million** per year for ten years of forested natural area restoration, expansion and planting as outlined in the Forest Management Framework
- Secure federal funding to uplift the urban forest, including efforts to resource NYCHA campuses to care for their urban forest and create jobs for residents in partnership with the Department of Parks and Recreation.

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. It is imperative that this City Council sees this as an environmental injustice and should make securing the future of New York City’s urban tree canopy a top priority.

Sincerely,

Caleb Smith

Resiliency Coordinator

646-983-7288 | caleb.smith@weact.org

Lonnie J. Portis

New York City Policy & Advocacy Manager

646-866-8720 | lonnie@weact.org



717 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10022
212.310.6600

Testimony of the Central Park Conservancy on the State of New York City's Forest Canopy June 13, 2023

Good morning and thank you to Chairperson Krishnan and other members of the Committee for this opportunity to testify. My name is David Saltonstall, and I am the Vice President for Government Relations & Policy for the Central Park Conservancy.

I want to thank the City Council for their leadership in advancing this important legislation to monitor, protect and grow the NYC tree canopy in an equitable way, and advancing the work of the NYC Urban Forest Agenda. We are fully supportive of the legislation under discussion today.

We take very seriously the care and maintenance Central Park's tree canopy at the Conservancy -- not just because of the beauty that trees add to the Park, but because we know that the city's tree canopy has a profound impact on our collective environment, our economy, and our public health.

Part of our work includes original research we have conducted through the Central Park Climate Lab, a research arm we founded in 2020 to focus on the impacts of climate change on urban parks, with an eye toward sharing what we learn with other urban parks around the country and the world.

In one of our most recent studies, we asked: What are the air temperature differences between distinct areas common to many urban parks -- between street trees within paved or built surfaces, between trees next to maintained lawns, in forests, in meadows and other environments.

We deployed 16 air-temperature sensors in different areas, then collected and analyzed the data.

The bottom line: On the warmest day last summer, the Central Park woodlands were up to 10 degrees Fahrenheit cooler than around street trees.

This is data we plan to share more widely in the coming months, but the legislation before you today would help all researchers for years to come. It would not only set critical goals toward expanding the city's tree canopy, it would also require the City to collect LIDaR data to monitor the effectiveness of the plan.

This LIDaR data would provide the Central Park Climate Lab and others with the high-resolution data we need to truly measure the health of the city's tree canopy, and to help us more fully understand the impacts of climate change. Unless we can accurately define the challenges we are up against - including the impacts of more intense storms that are surely coming our way - it will be difficult to devise the right solutions for our city.

In sum, it is our collective responsibility to safeguard and expand this precious asset for the well-being and sustainability of our city and its residents. By recognizing the importance of trees and prioritizing their preservation, this legislation will help to create a greener, more resilient, and thriving New York City for generations to come.

CITY HALL PARK CONSERVANCY

Testimony by: April Bovet Krishnan, Board Member

June 12, 2023

Hello, my name is April Bovet Krishnan, and I'm a long-time Tribeca resident and a founding Board Member of the City Hall Park Conservancy. Thank you to Chairman Krishnan and the Committee for inviting us to submit testimony today to advance this important legislation. The Conservancy is a volunteer-led non-profit organization that works towards helping the Park maximize its potential through horticultural initiatives and free programming. We are proud to be a member of the Forest for All NYC consortium, as we feel strongly about the importance of protecting and expanding the urban forest in an equitable way.

Tree canopy monitoring and the creation of a NYC forest plan is a long overdue initiative in the City's long-term planning and will directly benefit all New Yorkers. We see the benefits of tree cover right outside these windows in City Hall every day, providing shade and shelter to thousands. We are lucky to have an extraordinary collection of London plane trees, ginkgos, American elms and many others in City Hall Park – but we need more. Street trees could create green connections northeast towards Columbus Park and Collect Pond, west along Chambers Street to the river and south towards Bowling Green. These bills will be essential to meeting Mayor Adam's recently announced 30% canopy goal citywide in the updated PlaNYC.

We strongly support Intro 1065 and 1066, which will increase consideration for the role of trees and the urban forest. For Bill 1065 in particular, we would like to request that consideration be given to ensure that the DPR is supported and appropriately resourced in planning and has a co-lead with broader jurisdictional authority, as well as the time and funding to accomplish this effort. As others have mentioned, a timeline of achieving 30% cover by 2035 would also be beneficial. We also support adding language which explicitly accounts for and improves environmental justice, climate change, health, access, workforce, and addresses the full life cycle of trees.

I want to thank the committee again for hearing our thoughts and opinions supporting this bill.

I'm Meaghan McElroy, Communications Associate for Regional Plan Association. RPA has been working toward a better future for our tri-state region for over 100 years; in the recent past, that work has been focused on creating a sustainable, healthier, and more equitable place for people to live.

RPA is in support of Int 1066-2023 and Int 1065-2023, measures that would not only create an Urban Forest Master Plan for New York City but encourage and monitor the urban canopy's health and growth for years to come. Street trees are important to the urban landscape beyond their aesthetic value – they're valuable resources to help cool our streets, mitigate the heat island effect, contribute to better air quality, and capture stormwater runoff, among numerous other benefits as detailed in our reports "[Re-Envisioning the Right-of-Way](#)" and "[Preventing Another Ida](#)."

The proposed bills would be great steps towards ensuring that urban trees and other vegetation are used as tools in long-term sustainability planning and would help fulfill Eric Adams' PlaNYC 30% canopy goal for the city. However, these goals need timelines in order to ensure they're actionable and on track in the years to come. We encourage the Committee to establish a timeline for 30% canopy cover, ideally reaching that number by 2035.

Additionally, it's imperative that the Committee pay special attention to making sure the street canopy is equitably distributed across the boroughs, with special attention to environmental justice communities. Historically, lower levels of tree canopy are in neighborhoods with lower access to wealth and neighborhoods with higher proportions of people of color – and higher levels of vulnerability to extreme heat. It's imperative that the Committee ensures vulnerable communities benefit from any future master plan.

Maintaining and increasing the urban canopy is an incredible way to build our city's climate resilience, improve our neighbors' health, and create a more equitable city. We encourage the Committee to sign Int 1066-2023 and Int 1065-2023 into law and to ensure that these plans are executed in a timely and just manner.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony and to the Committee for hearing these bills.

June 13, 2023

Written testimony for City Council Hearing
Committee on Parks and Recreation

My name is Elana Ehrenberg and I am the Senior Policy Manager at Design Trust for Public Space. The Design Trust, founded in 1995, is a non-profit organization that unlocks the potential of New York's public spaces. Our unique model catalyzes design ideas into action for a more just and equitable city.

I would like to thank the Committee on Parks and Recreation for hearing [Int 1066-2023](#) and [Int 1065-2023](#), regarding the urban forest and inviting this testimony. Advancing this important legislation to monitor, protect and grow the NYC tree canopy in an equitable way will improve the city's sustainability which improves the quality of life for us all.

The Design Trust has been a member of the Forest for All NYC coalition since its inception. This coalition of over 90 organizations across business, nonprofit, conservation, and environmental justice sectors has been working to educate New Yorkers and its leaders about the importance of the urban forest. We're encouraged to see these newly introduced bills are actions directly from the coalition's Agenda. We understand that public spaces like parks, urban forests and open green areas are critical tools for the city's response to the effects of climate change. There is a clear link between proximity to green space and overall community health, from cooling in extreme heat to cleaner air.

In New York City, an individual living in the South Bronx has a life expectancy of 69.5 years, while a resident of the Upper East Side has a life expectancy of 89.5 years, 20 years longer. 80% of health outcomes depend on our physical and social environment—the world and people around us shape our well-being. Our [Restorative City](#) initiative was dedicated to exploring how public space and the built environment can be used as a tool to advance health equity, a concept which means that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible. Where we live matters, equal access to green space, transportation, adequate housing, and other basic resources can drastically change the quality and longevity of our lives.

We are in support of [Int 1066-2023](#) which would require the Office of Long-term Planning and Sustainability to consider the role of trees, tree canopy, and vegetation in its response to climate change, the most pervasive and persistent public health crisis across the globe. Our urban forests and tree canopy are a key tool for understanding and addressing climate vulnerability across the five boroughs.

We are also in support of [Int 1065-2023](#) which would require the City to create an Urban Forest Master Plan, aimed at protecting and increasing the City's urban forest to 30% canopy cover. However we believe requiring a clear timeline and allocating funding to support the Department

of Parks and Recreation in this important endeavor is crucial to its success. The plan should explicitly address environmental justice, climate change, health equity, access, and the full life cycle of trees in our city.

Passing these bills are good for the urban forest, good for New Yorkers' health and well-being, and essential to meeting Mayor Adam's recently announced PlaNYC 30% canopy goal citywide. This and the long overdue consideration of trees in the City's long-term planning will help promote equitable health outcomes in every neighborhood.

We thank the City Council for their leadership on this issue and thank you for your time and consideration today.



EL PUENTE
LEADERS FOR PEACE & JUSTICE

El Puente De Williamsburg, Inc.
211 South 4th Street
Brooklyn, NY 11211

Good morning my name is Rami Dinnawi, I am the Environmental Justice Campaign & Policy Manager at El Puente. A community based organization working at the nexus of environmental justice, social justice, youth development, & the self determination of all peoples for over 4 decades now.

Thank you for giving us the time to be here and testify on these bills. We are a proud member of the Forest for All Coalition, a coalition of over 90 organizations in the city aligned together to actively & effectively call for an equitable and just implementation of an urban forest that counters our concrete jungle & racist infrastructure that has plagued our communities w/ extreme heat, stormwater flooding & hazardous air quality.

We thank you for the leadership of this body in advancing these pieces of legislation not only to grow & expand our tree canopy but to do so with oversight mechanisms to ensure that it is done in an equitable and just fashion. This is in line with the NYC Urban Forest Agenda developed by our coalition in recent years.

With these bills, the city's trees will be guided by a master plan and will be folded into long term consideration & sustainability efforts. This is a step in the right direction but it is definitely not a panacea. We need to ensure that the right agencies, namely the department of parks & recreation, receive the necessary support & **FUNDING** to plan & execute its mandate in the proposed bills. Furthermore, to stay true to the spirit of accountability intended in these bills, there needs to be a timeline for achieving the promised 30% tree canopy cover. Ideally by 2035.

I will close with this reminder: " There is no sustainability without Environmental Justice. There is no Environmental Justice without historically disadvantaged communities. There is no Equity without Accountability. And there is no trust without centering those that have been historically harmed by the policies of the council & administrations."

Thank you

We'd like to thank the City Council for their leadership in advancing important legislation to monitor, protect and grow the NYC tree canopy in an equitable way. These bills will create a NYC urban forest plan, vital tree canopy monitoring and the long overdue consideration of trees in the City's long-term planning. Passing these bills are good for the urban forest, good for New Yorkers' health and well-being, and essential to meeting Mayor Adam's recently announced PlaNYC 30% canopy goal citywide.

As the Forest Hills Green Team and members of the Forest for All NYC Coalition, we want to explain why tree coverage is so important to our neighborhoods of Rego Park and Forest Hills. Our neighborhoods are bordered by significant highways which worsen our air quality. Fortunately for us, we have good coverage of trees lining our streets. Having more tree coverage would only serve to better our air. As we are seeing during this public health emergency, the air we breathe is vital and delicate.

We're proud to be a part of Forest for All NYC, a coalition of over 90 organizations across business, nonprofit, conservation, and environmental justice sectors. Our coalition advances the NYC Urban Forest Agenda. We work tirelessly to educate New Yorkers and its leaders about the importance of the urban forest. We're humbled to see these newly introduced bills are actions directly from our Agenda.

Lucy Koteen
138 Lafayette Av
Brooklyn, Ny 11238
lucy.koteen@gmail.com
718-938-3935

June 12, 2023

#1065 This bill would require the Department of Parks and Recreation, in consultation with any other appropriate City Departments, State Agencies or Authorities, and any interested non-governmental parties, to create an Urban Forest Master Plan which would be aimed at protecting and increasing the City's urban forest. It would be aimed at increasing tree and vegetation cover across the City and requires the establishment of goals to expand and protect the urban forest. The plan would be required to be updated every five years. It would also require the City to collect LIDaR data to monitor the effectiveness of the plan.

#1066 This bill would require the office of long-term planning and sustainability to consider the role of trees, tree canopy, and vegetation in its long-term sustainability planning.

Of course tree canopy and the role of trees should be considered in all planning, long and short term. Every scientist has cited tree preservation as an important aspect of the response to global warming.

I have long contended that there is a need for a separate agency with an Urban Forest Master **not** under the Parks Department. The Parks Department has a history of deforestation and accepting the City's plans to destroy the Urban Forest.

-Did the Parks Dept raise objections when the City planned to remove close to 1000 trees in East River Park?

-Did the Parks Dept raise objections when the city and state allowed 2000 trees to be removed from the Graniteville Wetlands in order for a BJs and a parking lot to replace it? And as projected, Graniteville, a low income community, was flooded, after a large rain incident.

-Did the Parks Dept raise objections to the 114 mature trees currently being removed from Wagner Park?

-Did you know that the Parks Dept cut down 40-50 healthy trees in Manhattan Beach a couple of years ago, costing 3 million? What did that cost in health effects?

But I will focus on the project in my neighborhood.

-The Parks Dept has plans to remove 78 mature trees in Fort Greene Park and to replace the North West section with a hardscape 43-foot plaza without any regard to the increased heat index, increased asthma in NYCHA this will cause, the reduction of carbon sequestration that will occur, the impact on the over 100 bird species in Fort Greene Park, and the unnecessary expense of this \$21 million project at a time of a shrinking budget for parks around the city.

What is this plan even about? We had to sue the city twice to read an unredacted report which confirmed that the Parks Dept lied to the public. They lack transparency as we had to FOIL for any information that we were looking for. And they repeatedly lied about the health of the trees in the park, which we proved using their own arborist report. We had to sue the city and won, to force them to perform an environmental assessment. They had claimed that this project, which radically changes the North West corner of this historic Frederick Olmstead park, is nothing more than maintenance! They claimed that they had many public engagement meetings about the park. Not one person said please cut down all our shade trees in the area. No, the opposite was said. This is a tactic we are so familiar with-the holding of the public engagement meeting that always concludes with the original proposal and does not listen to the comments made by the public. You are familiar with this trick, right?

The Draft EAS that some of us have read despite the Parks Dept denying the public access to it, does not address one environmental impact.

To clear the sight lines to the monument from the street. That is the main reason given for **deforesting** Fort Greene Park at the North West section of the park, which is across from a large NYCHA complex. One of the design principles of Olmstead was one of providing meandering paths which led to discovery in the park. This Parks Without Borders remodeling prioritizes monument sightlines over mature healthy oxygen creating and carbon sequestering trees!

There are many more accounts of unnecessary tree removal throughout the city. Look into it.

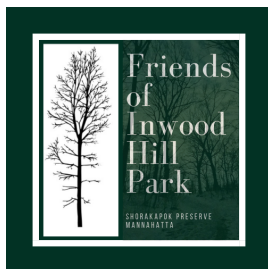
As stated on the website of the Parks Dept -

A large healthy tree removes almost 70 times more air pollution each year than a small newly planted tree.

Look at the i-tree accounts of how much each tree gives us in environmental and economic savings.

<https://tree-map.nycgovparks.org/tree-map/tree/5005962>

Each time they remove large mature trees, we are told that the Parks Dept will plant the same amount or more new trees. To suggest that new trees can replace 60 foot trees with massive canopies that will take 20 to 30 years to reach this size, if they even survive, is outrageous. Our children, our seniors, our birds, do not have 30 years to wait for shade and oxygen. Do not let the Parks Dept and the City get away with the arboricide they have planned in Fort Greene Park. The first obligation of this committee should be to protect the trees we have now. Do not place an Urban Forest Master under the control of the Parks Dept. Place it in a new agency that understands the benefits of large mature trees with large canopies.



Friends of Inwood Hill Park
165 Seaman Avenue, Apt 5B
New York, NY 10034

June 13, 2023

Subject: June 13 Hearing of the Committee on Parks and Recreation

Reference: Bills 1065 & 1066

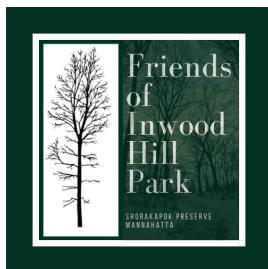
To the New York City Council, Parks & Recreation Committee:

I am John Druzba, a NYC Parks Super Steward, offering testimony to the Committee on Parks and Recreation at the June 13th Oversight hearing. I write on behalf of the Friends of Inwood Hill Park, a diverse community and long lineage of Conservationists, NYC Parks Advanced Stewards, Environmentalists, Arborists, Naturalists and the like. We also represent the 2nd iteration of an organization with the same name and passions as ours, established in the 1970's. We are a humble member of the Forest For All NYC coalition. Several local Super Stewards have agreed to this testimony and have added their names to the bottom of this document.

Inwood Hill Park, also known as Shorakapok Preserve, houses Manhattan's largest (some say only) remaining old growth natural forest. Over 60 species of trees call this land home, of which we give name to in the addendum below. We recognize and acknowledge that this park stands on the Indigenous territory known as "Lenapehoking," and we are very aware that our park and the trees within, are a shared resource, and that it's our collective responsibility to protect them. We'd like to recognize the late NYC council member Stan Michaels, who protected Inwood Hill park from developers, and the late Reginald Pelham Bolton as well as our late co-founder Sally Fisher, whose individual impacts over the last century on this land are immeasurable.

We appreciate the opportunity to speak in support of trees citywide, and call on the committee to amend the City Charter (ref bills 1065 & 1066) to require the consideration of trees, tree canopy, and vegetation in long term planning; and require the City to produce an Urban Forest Plan and periodically monitor canopy towards a 30% canopy goal. The preservation and expansion of NYC's forest and tree canopy is essential to reducing NYC's carbon footprint, reducing stormwater runoff and resulting combined sewer overflow events, fostering mental health, reducing the urban heat island effect, especially in historically disadvantaged communities, providing key habitat for animals, and so much more. Coordination at all levels of government is key to preserving and expanding our urban forest. Amending the City Charter to include the consideration of trees, tree canopy, and vegetation in long term planning, will help ensure this coordination takes place. Sarah Charlop-Powers of the Natural Areas Conservancy offered testimony to NYC Council P&R on Oct 25, 2018, and put together a forest framework that might be useful to your planning. It is referenced through this published link here:

https://naturalareasnyc.org/content/forests/natural-areas-conservancy-testimony_nyc-council-hearing_october-25-2018.pdf



Friends of Inwood Hill Park
165 Seaman Avenue, Apt 5B
New York, NY 10034

In our experience, coordination is key, but there is a historical lack of funding and allocation of resources toward our City's forests and natural areas. FIHP came into being to help fill that gap. The Shorapok Preserve is under threat from climate change, invasive species, erosion and upkeep. We've done the work, in partnership with NYC Parks, Riverkeeper, NYSDEC, ADEUSA, Inwood Hill Park Conservancy, WHIN Food Council, NYRR, NYC Sanitation, Inwood Sprouts, The RING Garden, Shorakapok Earthkeepers, and many other organizations, to remove the equivalent of over 1000 industrial sized trash bags filled with park litter, led hundreds of invasive species removal projects, installed erosion control, planted thousands of trees, shrubs, and other vegetation to help preserve and encourage the natural regeneration of the forest. However, there is more work to be done and it's urgent to help the forest flourish.

We also take this opportunity to call on the committee to draft a bill in the future that establishes a relationship between Parks and Sanitation departments, requiring them to recycle, since **heretofore all parks in all 5 boroughs do not recycle**. We also encourage the committee to consider a packaging-reduction bill, akin to the bill that is currently with our NY State legislators. R.P. Bolton, a local conservationist wrote of Inwood Hill in circa 1930 that "...unfortunately, the majority leave papers and other refuse behind them, and a smaller number leave broken bottles as mementoes of their visits..." This was long before today's more permanent plastic problem. Please help us keep plastic fragments out of our Hudson, our Muscota Marsh, our wildlife, our pollinators, our air, and the soil that our trees have their roots in. Keeping litter out of our forests is also essential in maintaining their health.

Reaching the goal of 30% tree canopy coverage will undoubtedly improve the lives of New Yorkers and wildlife alike. We appreciate and respect the position you are in today to coordinate this effort through the city government to produce an Urban Forest Plan committed to the preservation and expansion of NYC's forest and tree canopy.

Sincerely,

John Druzba
NYC Parks Super Steward
Co-organizer of Friends of Inwood Hill Park

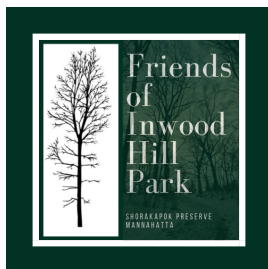
Chris Whitney
NYC Parks Super Steward
Co-organizer of Friends of Inwood Hill Park

Olivia Rosenkrantz
NYC Parks Advanced Steward

Adam Martinek
NYC Parks Super Steward
Director of Inwood Hill Park Conservancy

Delmar Thompson
NYC Parks Super Steward

Marion Boulton
NYC Parks Super Steward



Friends of Inwood Hill Park
165 Seaman Avenue, Apt 5B
New York, NY 10034

Addendum:

We'd like to give names to the trees that thrive in our park, the american sycamore tree, the london planetree, the silver linden tree, the littleleaf linden tree, the american basswood tree, the black cherry tree, the Japanese flowering cherry tree, the plum tree, the callery pear tree, the osage orange tree, the european lime tree, the sugar maple, the silver maple, the red maple, the sycamore maple (maples and hardwoods are favored by the asian longhornred beetle), the dreaded invasive norway maple and "crimson king" norway maple, the mulberry, the hackberry, the red oak (both southern & northern), the black oak, the white oak, the pin oak, the bur oak, the shingle oak, the swamp white oak, the willow oak, the dogwood, the flowering dogwood, the american elm, the siberian elm, the chinese elm, the persian ironwood, the ginkgo, the tulip, the sweetgum, the princesstree, the boxelder tree, the black locust, the thornless honeylocust, the Japanese zelkova tree, the japanese pagoda tree, the kentucky coffeetree, the green ash tree, the white ash tree (ash tree's are threatened by the emerald ash borer insect), the invasive tree of heaven (favored by the infamous invasive spotted lanternfly), the pine, the eastern white pine, eastern hemlock, american beech, the pignut hickory, the bitternut hickory, the hawthorn, the cockspur hawthorn, the magnolia, the downy serviceberry, the river birch, the eastern redbud, and the cottonwood, to name a few. These trees constantly teach us about diversity, and we respect their ability to coexist within nearly 200 acres of forest. To use the words of our co-founder, the late Sally Fisher, "Inwood Hill Park is our largest and most beautiful classroom."

Testimony

New York City Council
Committee on Parks and Recreation Oversight Hearing
Tuesday, June 13, 2023

Gowanus Canal Conservancy Testimony for City Council, Committee on Parks and Recreation Oversight Hearing

My name is Natasia Sidarta. I am the Community Stewardship & Operations Director at Gowanus Canal Conservancy (GCC), where I oversee community stewardship and volunteer programs to empower local stakeholders in stewardship of local green spaces. We are a proud member of the Forest for All NYC Coalition, because we are committed to ensuring that our urban forest supports health, quality of life, resilience, and justice for all New Yorkers. We are here today to support bills that create a NYC urban forest plan, vital tree canopy monitoring and the long overdue consideration of trees in the City's long-term planning. Passing these bills are good for the urban forest, good for New Yorkers' health and well-being, and essential to meeting Mayor Adam's recently announced PlaNYC 30% canopy goal citywide.

Our urban forest includes more than 7 million trees in the city, across public and private lands, which provide critical ecosystem services to NYC residents – services that are becoming all the more important as our climate changes. Trees enhance quality of life and improve health and wellbeing for people by cleaning and cooling the air and reducing heat-related illness. They help tackle the causes and effects of the climate crisis by supporting energy efficiency, strengthening our shoreline, and absorbing carbon dioxide. Trees also absorb stormwater before it pollutes our waterways - this is especially critical in Gowanus where the canal receives 363 million gallons of Combined Sewer Overflow per year.

In Gowanus, 670 young trees installed over the past decade are growing to help fill a neighborhood-wide gap in the urban canopy. When mature, these trees will provide benefits of flood management, cooling and shade, benefits which will grow exponentially as this planted infrastructure matures. However, surviving to maturity depends on adequate maintenance and protection from the Parks Department, local organizations, and volunteers. In Gowanus, we empower a network of volunteer tree stewards, who water, weed, prune, and remove litter and debris. These activities provide social infrastructure, offering opportunities for neighbors to organize together for neighborhood beautification and environmental benefits.

However, street trees will always need maintenance that cannot be done by volunteers and small community organizations, such as structural pruning, stump removal, sidewalk repair, and invasive species control. The urban forest is critical public infrastructure and does not receive the resources it needs to equitably serve New Yorkers. The bills under consideration

would require the office of long-term planning and sustainability to consider the role of trees, tree canopy, and vegetation in its long-term sustainability planning, ensuring that the urban forest survives to maturity.

In addition, the bills would require the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) to create an Urban Forest Master Plan which would protect and increase the City's urban forest to 30 percent canopy cover, and establish goals to expand and protect the urban forest. While we support this initiative, DPR must be supported and resourced in planning, and has a co-lead(s) with broader jurisdictional authority as well as the time and funding to accomplish this important effort. In addition, the City should establish a timeline for achieving 30 percent cover, that is ideally 2035. And lastly, the plan should explicitly account for and improve environmental justice, climate change, health, access, workforce, and addresses the full life cycle of trees, and seed to salvage.

We thank the City Council for their leadership in advancing important legislation to monitor, protect and grow the NYC tree canopy in an equitable way. This legislation directly advances the Forest for All NYC's NYC Urban Forest Agenda.

Sincerely,
Natasia Sidarta
Community Stewardship & Operations Director
Gowanus Canal Conservancy



Green Map System
175 Rivington #1D
New York, NY 10002
Tel: +1 212 674 1631

Wendy E Brawer
Director
web@greenmap.org

GreenMap.org
Think Global, Map Local!

June 13, 2023

NYC City Council Tree Canopy Hearing Testimony

Regarding [Int 1065-2023](#) and [Int 1066-2023](#)

I'm on the Lower East Side Street Tree Task Force, and these are good bills. As you expand efforts to improve the canopy, prioritize **care for trees**.

You have seen dire predictions regarding El Nino and how 2024 will be way off the heat chart. Among the June 7th AQ impacts on humans was a doubling of emergency room visits for asthma that day. There are impacts on all living things. This is another reason why NYC needs an immediate **1000%** jump in tree care and stewardship training.

Tree contractors should be in better communications with property owners about the need to help water and care for newly planted saplings. We need more than a tiny tag to alert residents about the tree's needs. Schools could be connected with trees nearby and students should learn every year about tree care and importance.

The NYC Street Tree Map is terrific, but early this year, the CO2 ecological benefit metric for each tree was removed to be updated. We are still waiting. There were close to 3 million pounds a year of CO2 stored annually before this metric was removed. I hope City Council can have this value returned to this popular map.

Also, when we consider the threats to street trees, we need a citywide campaign to alert the people who drop dog waste on tree beds that curbing their pet is a healthier option. Dog urine forms a salty crust that prevents rain from being absorbed – this salt also draws water out from tree roots according to Brooklyn Botanic Garden. Dog owners need to be aware of the damage they are causing.

Too often, NYC removes trees as resiliency measures are installed, as in East River Park, where the removal of 700 trees since the end of 2021 has made the neighborhood – which is largely an Environmental Justice Area - noisier, hotter, dirtier and duller. Natural systems design must be promulgated to achieve equitable resiliency. Indeed, I heard the Speaker on NYCHA's canopy. While many NYCHA campuses have good canopy, Baruch Houses on the LES lost nearly 300 trees for FEMA repairs and resiliency. Today, 4 years after construction began, the campus is still a mess and it looks less ready for a downpour than ever.

Wendy Brawer
Founder and Director
212 674 1631



500 25th Street
Brooklyn, New York
11232-1755
green-wood.com

The Green-Wood
Cemetery
(718) 768-7300

The Green-Wood
Historic Fund
(718) 210-3080

Good afternoon Chair Krishnan and members of the committee. My name is Joseph Charap, and I am the Vice President of Horticulture at the Green-Wood Cemetery. We are a 478-acre National Historic Landmark and arboretum in the heart of Brooklyn. We are also a proud member of the NYC Forest For All Coalition.

We are here to voice our enthusiastic support for Councilmember Bottcher's bill to create an Urban Forest Plan. This plan is a vital first step to ensure that we achieve the Coalition's goal: to create a healthy, biodiverse, accessible, and resilient urban forest for all residents of NYC.

We also strongly endorse Councilmember's Brewer's bill. NYC is at a critical time that requires immediate and coordinated action to prepare for the threats posed by the rapidly changing climate. One of the city's greatest assets is its tree canopy. From stormwater mitigation to carbon sequestration to lessening the urban heat island effect, our trees do it all. But they need our help, and need to be considered in the city's planning.

Now too is the time to redress the legacy of inequity and environmental injustice of the distribution of the urban canopy. How do we protect our trees and provide the benefits of the canopy to all New Yorkers? With a plan like the one proposed by Councilmember Bottcher.

We're also here to issue a call-to-arms for any and every *private* landowner throughout the city, big or small, to ensure we get to the City's goal for canopy cover: homeowners in your districts, companies, privately owned greenspaces, and more. The Nature Conservancy's recent report looked at all the areas in NYC where trees could be planted. And 68% of that land is private. The takeaway is clear: if we're going to get to 30% canopy cover by 2035, we need private landowners to come through.

Green-Wood was founded in 1838 as the first, large-scale greenspace in Brooklyn and New York City. Today, as New York's largest contiguous private landowner, we are committed to leveraging our acreage to support the goals of the Coalition and the resilience of the city. We have 8,000 trees at Green-Wood. We will plant 2000 more over the next five years, growing our canopy cover from 32% to 35%.

Who benefits from a cemetery in Brooklyn planting more trees? Green-Wood's longest border is directly adjacent to Sunset Park. This thriving community is an Environmental Justice Area and two Federal Opportunity Zones. It has also been under-served, economically, culturally, and environmentally, for decades. What happens at Green-Wood does not just affect us, but all those who live around us. We may be private, but we are dedicated to helping the public good.



500 25th Street
Brooklyn, New York
11232-1755
green-wood.com

The Green-Wood
Cemetery
(718) 768-7300

The Green-Wood
Historic Fund
(718) 210-3080

Councilmember Bottcher's proposed Urban Forest Plan will galvanize other private landowners and provide solutions for how we collectively reach a citywide 35% canopy cover. It will take all of us to get there! I'd like to personally invite members of this committee to visit Green-Wood and see how our initiatives reinforce our commitment to the goals of the Coalition. My contact information is in the printed testimony and I look forward to welcoming you all to Green-Wood soon. Thank you.

Joseph Charap

icharap@green-wood.com

347-415-5192



JHBG | Jackson Heights Beautification Group

info@jhbog.org / 718-397-5019

I'm Len Maniace, a board member of the all-volunteer Jackson Heights Beautification Group. We're a civic, arts and environmental nonprofit in Queens, now in its 35th year. JHBG is a founding member of the Forest For All NYC coalition and fully supports the Urban Forest Agenda's goal of at least a 30 percent tree canopy by 2035, which we seek to have enacted into law.

I want to thank the Council Parks Committee and Committee President Krishnan — my council member—for considering this legislation which would accomplish important elements of the Urban Forest Agenda.

JHBG's Tree LC team is the most active tree-stewardship group in our city since 2021. We've installed more than 40 Parks-approved tree guards in the last 10 years and planted 10 street trees in the last 2 ½ years; we focus most on 50 street trees and provide care for several hundred other trees in the 11372 zip code. We've also created two bee and butterfly gardens, as well as a new mini-woodlands habitat, all at our Post Office and a public elementary school.

JHBG supports intro bills 1065 and 1066, with these additions:

- * The setting of 2035 as a target date for achieving the goal a tree canopy of at least of 30 percent. Without a deadline, goals lose their meaning.
- * The plan is explicitly designed to address climate change and environmental justice.
- * The NYC Department of Parks and Recreation is granted broader jurisdiction and sufficient funding (one percent of the NYC budget) to accomplish these goals.

We endorse the comments you've heard today, including the many environmental benefits that come from trees in the city, and how those benefits have not been parceled out equitably. I want to add that "Trees are Mother Nature's Air Conditioners," keeping our city habitable in the face of Global Warming.

All New Yorkers—especially children—deserve to fall under the spell of the natural world, every day. Nature should be available, beyond parks and the gardens of our leafier neighborhoods, in bits and pieces that we can see every day—outside our doors, on the way to the store, school or subway. It should be ubiquitous in our city, or as close as possible.

If you just look for nature, you will see bees and butterflies lured by native flowers in tree beds. Just out of sight, under a thin layer of soil, are earthworms, pill bugs and many other creatures—it's a mini-wildlife refuge! Then, there are the trees, themselves, perhaps the most crucial part of nature in our city. They are the biggest organisms on land, practically ecosystems unto themselves. They are homes to lichens, caterpillars, a variety of bugs and bigger critters.

I have a little homework assignment for our Council Members and their staffs—it's not painful and might even be fun: on your way home today, look for nature, where it is and where it isn't. Then imagine what it would mean to New Yorkers to live in a city that is more bountiful in its green space. If we give it a chance, nature will flourish here—and we all will be happier and healthier for it. Thank you.

Testimony by Len Maniace of the Jackson Heights Beautification Group

Some will make the case that one percent of the city budget should go to the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation because more funding is needed to clean New York City's air and help reduce pollution of nearby waterways.

Others will argue that a larger and robust urban forest will make New York City more resilient in the face of climate change; that neighborhoods with many large trees are significantly cooler than those lacking them, because trees truly are Mother Nature's air conditioners. The Urban Forest Agenda points the way to doing this—increasing our city's tree canopy to at least 30 percent by 2035, and doing so equitably.

And then there is the perennial need for recreation space in an ever-more crowded city.

All are essential reasons to significantly increase funding for New York City's parks, but then there is this: it is crucial for our city's economic future. Technology, as dramatically demonstrated by the pandemic, has reduced the need for workers to live near their jobs—perhaps as dramatically as construction of the highway systems led to the growth of dispersed suburbs across the nation in the decades after World War II.

We need to do more to attract and keep people in New York City. We have plenty of museums, concert halls and other major cultural venues. What New York City seriously lacks is green space that can be experienced every day by its residents.

While we need green roofs, green walls, and all the other way innovative ways of accommodating plants into the built environment, the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation must carry the heavy load for greening our city. Yet the department is hamstrung with a budget that is much less than that of other American cities. A Trust for Public Land report found that New York City tied for 10th among major American cities for park funding in 2022. (www.tpl.org/parkscore)

Humans need nature for their well-being. We evolved in nature and came to rely on forests for food, shelter and material that helped make civilization possible. It is likely built into our DNA. This makes increased funding for the Department of Parks and Recreation an issue that should unite all New Yorkers, no matter how rich or poor; their ethnicity; or how long ago they arrived upon our nation's shores. Not only is this the right thing to do, it is an essential thing to do.

Testimony for Int 1066-2023 and Int 1065-2023 on behalf of the Lower East Side Ecology Center.

We whole heartedly support both Int 1066-2023, requiring the city to consider the role of trees, tree canopy and vegetation in its long term sustainability planning, and Int 1065-2023, which would require Parks to create an Urban Forest Master Plan. For New York City to become a livable city for all its residents, we need to start considering our environmental health since it translates directly to human health.

The Lower East Side Ecology Center is a community-based organization offering innovative composting and e-waste recycling programs, environmental education, and stewardship programs to make New York City more sustainable and just for all New Yorkers. We are a proud member of the Forest for All NYC coalition which shares our values for a healthy, resilient, equitable and just New York City.

We like to thank the City Council and the sponsors of these bills for their leadership in advancing this important legislation, and don't think it is lost on anybody who just experienced the latest climate crisis, the unhealthy air quality caused by the Canadian wildfires, that is urgent we start working with natural systems to ensure a healthy environment for New York City residents. Therefore we would like to see a timeline established in Int 1065 to achieve a 30% canopy cover by 2035.

Trees add so many benefits to the City, from cooling neighborhoods, to filtering the air to absorbing storm water during heavy down pours – and these bills will allow us to grow this natural resource in our City by managing it on a community based level. By focusing on a community based approach the planning process will need to include advocates from our community to ensure that issues such environmental justice and workforce development are part of the process.

Lastly it will be important to ensure the Parks has the resources to properly plan for increasing the City's urban forest. Resources also need to be made available for maintaining this investment into our future.

Thank you.



**NORTH
BROOKLYN
PARKS
ALLIANCE**

**TESTIMONY OF KATIE DENNY HOROWITZ
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NORTH BROOKLYN PARKS ALLIANCE
FY24 BUDGET HEARING - WEDNESDAY, MAY 25, 2023**

I'm Katie Denny Horowitz, Executive Director of North Brooklyn Parks Alliance, a parks nonprofit founded in 2003 that is dedicated to creating an equitable, accessible, and vibrant parks system in the Greenpoint /Williamsburg neighborhoods. Marking our 20th anniversary this year, we are the only district-wide parks conservancy in New York City, serving all of Brooklyn's Community Board 1.

In that district-wide capacity, the North Brooklyn Parks Alliance works across a variety of spaces, from parks to plazas, from playgrounds to streets. And, in recent years, we have turned our focus to some of our smallest green spaces in the city: street trees.

Our purpose is twofold, both addressing the sad state of those trees during the pandemic and its impact on the quality of life of our neighbors, but also because of the clear, demonstrated impact a more robust tree canopy can have on the climate crisis at hand. With that in mind, we are a partner in Council Member Lincoln Restler's District 33 Street Tree Plan. In that role, we support their efforts to provide street tree care education, supplies, and coordinate compost delivery to volunteer tree care events. We are galvanized by the fact that Brooklyn's CB1 ranks in the bottom five of the 59 community boards in New York City for tree canopy coverage. Planting trees and maintaining them is critical to managing the effects of climate change where we live, and we have significant ground to cover.

As a proud member of the Forest for All Coalition, we stand by the Coalition's demand that our urban forest is fully funded, for both capital and operational expenses, in this year's budget. The urban forest is critical public infrastructure and does not receive the resources it needs to equitably serve all New Yorkers. We appreciate that the majority of our Council Members, including Parks Committee Chair Krishnan, have endorsed and uplifted a goal of at least 30% citywide canopy cover by 2035. We champion the same goal.

Please make sure the urban forest is fully funded, for both capital and operational expenses, in this year's budget. The urban forest is critical public infrastructure and does not receive the resources it needs to equitably serve New Yorkers.

Thank you for your consideration.



June 13, 2023

**Testimony of Matt Malina
on behalf of NYC H2O**

**before the New York City Council Committee on Parks and Recreation
Public Hearing on: NYC Urban Forest Legislation
Intros 1065 and 1066**

Thank you, Chair Krishnan and Members of the New York City Council Committee on Parks and Recreation, for your leadership in advancing important legislation to monitor, protect, and grow New York City's tree canopy in an equitable way.

My name is Matt Malina and I am the Director and Founder of NYC H2O. NYC H2O's mission is to inspire and educate New Yorkers of all ages to learn about, enjoy, and protect their city's local water ecology. Our activities promote science-based knowledge of New York's local ecosystems and of what is needed for urban water resilience in a time of escalating climate change impacts.

I am here today to testify in support of Intros 1065 and 1066, two bills that would require the City to consider the role of trees, tree canopy, and vegetation in its long-term sustainability planning and to create an Urban Forest Master Plan which would be aimed at protecting and increasing the City's urban forest to 30 percent canopy cover. Passing these bills is good for the urban forest, good for New Yorkers' health and well-being, and essential to meeting Mayor Adam's recently announced PlaNYC 30% canopy goal citywide.

NYC H2O is also a member of Forest for All NYC, a coalition of over 90 organizations across business, nonprofit, conservation, and environmental justice sectors. Our coalition advances the [NYC Urban Forest Agenda](#), something we encourage you to check out and incorporate into tree canopy planning. Many of our coalition members are also testifying today, so in addition to endorsing their testimonies, I will focus on the relationship between tree canopy and water quality.

According to EPA, "Trees are increasingly recognized for their importance in managing runoff. Their leaf canopies help reduce erosion caused by falling rain. They also provide surface area where rain water lands and evaporates. Roots take up water and help create conditions in the soil

that promote infiltration.”¹ DEP recognizes this important relationship between trees and water quality in the upstate watershed of the City’s drinking water with a Watershed Forest Management Plan² on City-owned land and a Watershed Forestry Program³ to work with private landowners. While the same forest management concerns for *drinking water* quality don’t apply to the urban canopy, New York City has a 520-mile coastline with numerous rivers, streams, creeks, ponds, and bays. Stormwater management is critically important as polluted runoff pollutes our waterways and stormwater exceeding our sewer system’s capacity results in combined sewer overflows (i.e., raw sewage flowing directly into our bodies of water). Incorporating the role of trees, tree canopy, and vegetation in long-term sustainability planning will help conserve our water ecosystems.

I would also like to reiterate some suggested amendments from the coalition. We suggest that the legislation:

1. Ensures the Department of Parks and Recreation is supported and resourced in planning, has co-leads with broader jurisdictional authority, and is allocated the time and funding to accomplish this important effort
2. Expands the Greener NYC initiative to include funding specifically for tree planting
3. Establishes a timeline for achieving 30 percent cover, ideally by 2035
4. Ensures the plan explicitly accounts for and improves environmental justice, climate change, health, access, workforce development, and addresses the full life cycle of trees from seed to salvage

Thank you for your consideration of NYC H2O’s testimony. We look forward to continuing to work with the Council Members, the Department of Parks and Recreation, and our community partner organizations to ensure New Yorkers have a thriving urban forest.

Contact: Matt Malina, matt@nych2o.org

¹ [Soak Up the Rain: Trees Help Reduce Runoff | US EPA](#)

² [New York City Watershed Forest Management Plan](#)

³ [Forestry - Watershed Agricultural Council](#)

**Testimony of Morgan Monaco, President, Prospect Park Alliance
NYC Council Oversight Hearing: The State of the City's Tree Canopy
June 13, 2023**

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 voice my support and thank the Council for its leadership in advancing important legislation to monitor, protect and grow New York City's urban forest. The urban forest is critical public infrastructure, and does not receive the resources it needs to serve New Yorkers equitably. This legislation will impactfully advance the City's Urban Forest Agenda.

Prospect Park Alliance is a member of the Forest for All NYC Coalition, which seeks to justly and equitably protect, maintain, expand and promote the NYC urban forest. The urban forest matters to our community because Prospect Park's 585 acres are home to 30,000 trees of more than 175 species. We at the Alliance are charged with maintaining the park's woodlands and natural areas, which represents 350 acres of important wildlife habitat that is home to many species of mammals, birds, and insects. This work to sustain Brooklyn's last remaining forest is critical in ensuring the health and longevity of Prospect Park and the overall prosperity and well-being of our City. As Brooklyn's Backyard, Prospect Park serves as an accessible gathering space for all of New York City and the diverse Brooklyn communities that border the Park.

As you know, the urban forest plays a vital role in maintaining the health of our City. Trees help regulate the temperature during hot summer months, reduce air pollution, which given the air quality crisis we just experienced is of significant importance, they help manage stormwater, and provide beautification. Trees are the lungs of our city and should be treated as important as a fire hydrant or lamppost. Despite the importance of the urban forest and its perennial need for stewardship, there is no dedicated, long-term funding or committed plan for managing NYC's trees in the years ahead.

These bills will create a NYC urban forest plan, vital tree canopy monitoring, and will ensure trees are considered in the City's long-term planning efforts. Passing these bills are good for the urban forest, good for New Yorkers' health and well-being, and essential to meeting Mayor Adam's recently announced PlaNYC 30% canopy goal citywide. While we support the legislation "Int 1065-2023" to create an urban forest master plan, there are some specific opportunities for improvement. First, ensuring NYC Parks is fully resourced, and has support from other agencies with broader jurisdictional authority. Second, establishing a timeline for achieving this goal by 2035. And lastly, ensuring the plan explicitly accounts for and improves environmental justice, climate change, health, access and workforce development goals.

We applaud the Council for endorsing the goal of reaching at least 30% citywide canopy cover by 2035 and its advocacy to ensure NYC Parks has a budget that is sufficient to both maintain and expand our urban forest at the pace that is needed in the face of climate change and extreme heat. It is now the time to guarantee the preservation and adequate funding of our cherished urban forest.

Protectors of Pine Oak Woods

P.O. Box 140747, Staten Island, NY 10314-0747; (929) 428-0878



Officers & Directors

President

Clifford A. Hagen

First Vice President

Jose Ramirez Garofalo

Second Vice President

Jack Bolembach

Treasurer

Hillel Lofaso

Corresponding Secretary

Mark LaTour

Recording Secretary

Lisa Abbott Pillarella

Membership Secretary

Vacant

Alan Benimoff, Ph.D

Linda Cohen

Elaine B. Croteau

Dominick Durso

Eileen Monreale

Jacqueline Perine

Charles Perry

Ellen O'Flaherty Pratt

Herb Smith

President Emeritus

Richard P. Buegler

Honorary Directors

Albert F. Appleton, Esq.

Joseph Ferricola

Hon. Ralph J. Lamberti

Richard T. Lynch

Lenore Miller

Robert N. Miraldi, Ph.D

Arthur M. Shapiro, Ph.D

Norma Siebenheller

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

Dear Chair Krishnan:

Protectors of Pine Oak Woods, Staten Island's oldest volunteer environmental preservation organization, was established in 1975. For nearly fifty years our members have advocated for an increased stewardship of park properties and the preservation of open space across Staten Island.

With appreciation we approach the Committee on Parks and Recreation to share comments pertinent to pending legislation. Representative government depends on a free exchange of ideas and Protectors of Pine Oak Woods values this opportunity to share our comments with this committee.

Staten Island, the Borough of Parks, is often disengaged from the other four boroughs, so when leaders of Forest for All NYC approached me some months back asking for Protectors to join the citywide coalition I took advantage of the invitation. Our locally focused mission aligns with this city-wide effort and since Staten Island is still a borough of NYC, I knew the membership of Protectors, more than one thousand strong, would embrace the coalition's work.

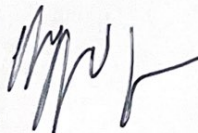
An urban forest master plan would benefit the people of Staten Island. Nearly one third of the island is open space, much of which is forested. Our trees keep Staten Island greener and cleaner. A master plan for the further preservation of open space and the continuation of five year updates and the use of LIDaR to gather accurate data will better guide development within the limits of current zoning which regulates the Special South Richmond Development District, Special Natural Areas District and the Hillside Preservation District.

Also important is the interconnectedness of our local park properties. Street trees and those on private property connect our green spaces and create a natural corridor for the safe movement of wildlife across the island. A greener neighborhood is a healthier neighborhood. Our communities deserve cleaner air and trees are the best vehicle to deliver the promise of a fresh, deep breath.

These bills before the committee are more than mere government legislation. These bills are an opportunity to improve the lives of children and families in communities across the city. The good people of New York City need cleaner air, greener neighborhoods and this legislation will bring benefits to every New Yorker.

Thank you for hearing my comments shared on behalf of the more than one thousand members of Protectors of Pine Oak Woods.

Sincerely,



6/3/23

Cliff Hagen
President
Protectors of Pine Oak Woods

Testimony of the Randall's Island Park Alliance (RIPA)
to the
New York City Council
Committee on Parks and Recreation
Hearing on the State of the City's Tree Canopy
June 13, 2023

My name is Christopher Girgenti and I am submitting this testimony as Director of Environmental Programs for the Randall's Island Park Alliance (RIPA).

As the stewards of Randall's Island Park, a cherished green oasis in the heart of New York City, working in partnership with the NYC Department of Parks & Recreation (NYC Parks), RIPA understands firsthand the importance of trees and a robust urban forest. We have witnessed the transformative power of nature in the park for which we care. We firmly believe the proposed legislation, Int 1066-2023 and Int 1065-2023, will significantly benefit our park, the city, and our neighboring communities of East Harlem, the South Bronx, and western Queens.

The emphasis of these two bills on monitoring, protecting, and expanding the tree canopy aligns perfectly with our mission to create a vibrant and sustainable natural haven for the well-being of all New Yorkers. We wholeheartedly support these bills and thank the City Council for their leadership in advancing this crucial legislation.

As steward of the largest dedicated greenspace for more than one million New Yorkers and a proud Forest for All Coalition member, RIPA is deeply committed to advancing the NYC Urban Forest Agenda. We support the proposed bills to establish a comprehensive urban forest plan, facilitate vital canopy monitoring, and prioritize trees in long-term planning. These actions are essential for the health and well-being of New Yorkers and align with Mayor Adam's PlaNYC goal of 30% citywide canopy coverage.

RIPA supports Int 1066-2023, requiring the Office of Long-term Planning and Sustainability to consider trees and vegetation in sustainability planning. Trees play a critical role in our city's sustainability and resilience.

RIPA also endorses Int 1065-2023, which calls for an Urban Forest Master Plan by NYC Parks in consultation with relevant entities. This plan aims to achieve 30% canopy cover, including updates every ten years and LiDAR data collection.

To enhance Int 1065-2023, RIPA recommends adequately supporting and resourcing NYC Parks in the planning process. We recommend establishing a clear timeline for achieving the 30% canopy cover, ideally by 2035. The plan should also explicitly address environmental justice, climate change, public health, access to green spaces, workforce development, and the tree life cycle.

In conclusion, we reiterate our support for both bills and express gratitude to the City Council and bill sponsors. RIPA is committed to helping to ensure this legislation becomes law and we offer our expertise and resources. Thank you for considering the positive impact of these bills on our urban forest, the well-being of our city's residents, and a sustainable and equitable future.

**Committee on Parks & Recreation
New York City Council Hearing: The State of the City's Tree Canopy
Tuesday, June 13, 2023, 10am**

First, I'd like to extend my thanks to the City Council and specifically the bill sponsors, Council Members Brewer, Krishnan, Bottcher and Louis, for this critical legislation mandating that the NYC Parks Department create an urban forest master plan.

My name is Merritt Birnbaum, and I am the President & CEO of Riverside Park Conservancy. It is an honor to submit testimony today on behalf of the Conservancy and as a member of the Forest for All Coalition, an intersectional network of nearly 100 organizations and businesses that are advocating together to advance the [NYC Urban Forest Agenda](#).

Riverside Park Conservancy works in partnership with the NYC Parks Department to care for 400 acres of parkland spread over 6 miles, from 59th Street to 181st Street in Manhattan. With an estimated 3 million annual visitors, our core users are residents from the Upper West Side, Morningside Heights, West Harlem and Washington Heights.

Our park is home to 60 acres of forest including five different forest community types, two of which are invasive community types. The park's trees and forested areas provide year-round habitat for local wildlife and serve as a vital source of food and shelter for thousands of migratory birds in the spring and fall. Moreover, our forest actively filters pollutants from the air, captures storm water run-off, helps us keep cool in rising temperatures, and soothes our nervous systems.

Yet, according to a comprehensive study performed by Natural Areas Conservancy in 2020, most of the woodlands in Riverside Park are under substantial ecological threat and require the efforts of a skilled forestry crew to conduct restoration activities. Of the 27 acres assessed, 17 were noted to contain medium-to-high levels of ecological threat and require the highest intensity work types.

It is unacceptable that our city is allowing the deterioration of this extraordinary resource. Not only are our forests providing essential wildlife habitat and human health benefits, but they are also a critical piece of protective infrastructure in the fight against climate change. Recent studies have shown that the trees and vegetation in New York's five boroughs collectively absorb more than 40 percent of the city's total CO2 emissions.

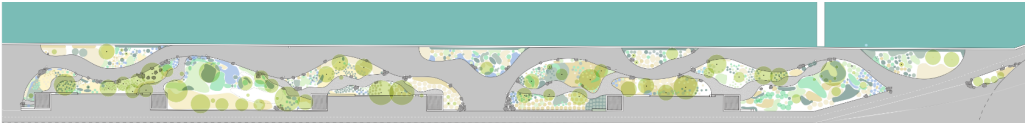
We need to begin treating trees not merely as resources but as co-inhabitants: living, breathing entities who also happen to be exceedingly generous neighbors. The disturbing lack of legislation in place to safeguard our urban forest represents both an urgent necessity and a tremendous opportunity. The City has the power to create policies that protect and bolster our trees, the same way we have policies in

place to protect and bolster our residents. The bills under consideration today will provide the necessary framework for understanding, monitoring, and caring for the trees that make our city livable. The creation of an Urban Forest Master Plan will increase the overall visibility of our trees, shine a spotlight on the inequitable distribution of tree cover across our City, and help bring more focus to communities of color and climate-vulnerable neighborhoods.

While there is room for further specification within the legislation, passing Int 1065-2023 is a key step toward city-wide policies that will support forest restoration, expansion and ongoing stewardship. Clear and measurable parameters will give policymakers and on-the-ground practitioners a roadmap for incorporating the forest's health into future city planning. Additionally, implementation of the bills proposed today is vital to achieve the Adams Administration's recently announced goal to reach 30% tree canopy cover by 2035.

However, to properly implement policies focused on sustaining our urban forest, the City must also commit to properly funding the NYC Parks Department. Two-thirds of NYC's trees are standing on public parkland. In FY24, the Parks Department faces over \$50 million in proposed cuts, which would cascade into the loss of hundreds of key roles – including among its already overstretched forestry crews. We stand with over 400 organizations in the PlayFair Coalition to demand that 1% of the City's budget be allocated to Parks. The agendas of the PlayFair Coalition and the Forest For All Coalition are intricately linked, and we urge our elected officials to consider them together.

We need holistic policies – and adequate funding – to protect the City's precious natural areas, including its forest canopy. The implementation of a comprehensive, city-wide plan that is supported by sufficient financial resources will make for a healthier and more resilient New York – not to mention healthier, happier New Yorkers!



My name is Candace Thompson and I am writing in my formal role as the manager of Stuyvesant Cove Park, a 2 acre all native public greenspace in Lower Manhattan that is managed by the non-profit Solar One. Our organization works in alternative energy, facilitating the installation of solar panels on low income houses and NYCHA buildings. We provide green workforce training to hundreds of disadvantaged youth every year. We work in schools, teaching about sustainability through our Green Design Lab, and we steward Stuy Cove Park using regenerative land management practices.

Our organization has recently joined with the Forest For All NYC Coalition because we are deeply committed to collaborations that promote and amplify the work of building a just and sustainable future here in NYC and beyond. Today I am writing to voice our support for Bills Int 1065-2023 and Int 1066-2023 which would prioritize the creation of an Urban Forest Master Plan and the inclusion of forestry in long term urban planning efforts. We strongly support the big picture goal of getting NYC to an equitably distributed forest canopy cover of 30% by the year 2035.

I have recently learned, firsthand, just how many ecosystem services our urban forest canopy provides for NYC's human and non-human residents. Built on top of a capped brownfield, Stuy Cove Park was established in 2002, and over the past 20 years this commons developed into a mature forest that was home to hundreds of insect and bird species including migratory songbirds, monarch butterflies and hawks. The shade provided by the elms, oaks, hackberries and more offered a verdant and cool oasis in Community Board 6- the neighborhood with the least public greenspace in all of Manhattan. It was a pleasure to garden in the park every day and to host public programming among its trees.

However in late 2022 the park was razed and rebuilt as part of the East Side Coastal Resiliency project, a necessary evil in the battle against anthropogenically induced sea level rise. I'm not here to comment on the Big U project as a whole, but rather to testify that while we now have a new park, it is a starkly different environment. The birds and insects will be slow to return. The noise and air pollution of the FDR are no longer buffered by trees. Surface temperatures are markedly hotter due to lack of shade, and sun exposure is a risk both for my staff, our surrounding community of elders, and the children which we host in the park for field trips and summer camps. It is so hot, in fact, that we are severely limiting our programming this July and August as we anticipate that the fully exposed landscape will be positively unbearable from 10am to 4pm each day. It is only in the past few weeks as temperatures have started to rise that it has truly hit me just how much we lost in the demolition of our old park. Any further loss of tree canopy only exacerbates our compounding climate problems, and should be avoided whenever possible.



Before and After the ESCR: Stuy Cove Park 1.0 and 2.0

I am also a Trees NY Citizen Pruner and pay close attention to the extreme conditions our poor street trees endure. In fact, the mature lindens outside of my home were battered this winter by a scaffolding installation and may never recover. Our street trees provide so much for us urbanites in exchange for so very little. They clean our air, absorb our stormwater, shade our homes, provide habitat, and buffer noise, all in exchange for maybe 36 square feet of compacted dirt on a gritty city street. If New York is to be a leader in sustainable solutions to climate change it is time for us to acknowledge the role these gentle giants play in building a healthy and resilient city by funding the study, stewardship and long term care of our arboreal neighbors. Much as we saw last week with the passage of the Zero Waste Act, the time is now for NYC to implement an Urban Forest Master Plan and to integrate our city trees and urban tree canopy into our long term sustainability planning.

Thanks,
Candace



Stewards of
Ewen Park

Shekar Krishnan
Committee on Parks and Recreation
New York City Council

Re: Urban Forest Legislation
Hearing: Tuesday, June 13, 2023, 10 am

Dear Councilman Krishnan:

I am writing in support of two bills under consideration that will greatly support and expand and improve our Urban Forest: Int 1066-2023 and Int 1065-2023. These bills will create a NYC urban forest plan, ensure vital tree canopy monitoring, and incorporate the long overdue consideration of trees in the City's long-term planning.

For Int 1065-2023, creation of an Urban Forest Master Plan, we hope that the legislation will ensure that NYC Parks is resourced in planning and implementation, and extensive cross-agency coordination. We also expect that the Master Plan will explicitly account for and improve environmental justice, climate change, health, access, workforce, and address the full life cycle of trees. New York will have to be creative in identifying potential for green infrastructure, working with private partners and authorizing and encouraging all City agencies to rethink underutilized tracts of land, which could include reforestation of parking and vacant lots, reducing the number of lanes of traffic to make way for trees, or claiming medians. The city should look to converting infrastructure from grey to green wherever possible.

Passing these bills will be good for the urban forest, good for New Yorkers' health and well-being, and essential to meeting Mayor Adam's recently announced PlaNYC 30 percent canopy goal citywide. Today, NYC has 22 percent tree canopy cover and this goal will require an additional 15,000 new acres of tree canopy. Adam's canopy initiative is pegged to cooling our built environment to protect New Yorkers from extreme heat. In addition to providing shade to cool neighborhoods, trees' myriad benefits include filtering pollutants, sequestering carbon dioxide, reducing energy consumption in buildings, absorbing stormwater, reducing and dampening noise pollution, supporting biodiversity, and of course, making our neighborhoods more pleasant to live in and visit. All of this contributes to the long-term resiliency of our City.

Ewen Park is a small, seven-acre respite in the Bronx. We hope the city will bolster investment to ensure the long-term health of this and other green spaces in New York City. The Stewards of Ewen are proud to be a part of Forest for All NYC, a coalition of more than 90 organizations across business, nonprofit, conservation, and environmental justice sectors working to pursue these important goals.

We thank you and all the bill sponsors and City Council for your leadership in advancing this important legislation.

Julie Jenkins and the Stewards of Ewen Park
info@ewenparkbronx.nyc | 231st and Riverdale Avenue, Bronx

STICKBULB
1040 46th Ave
Long Island City, NY 11101

June 13, 2023

To Whom It May Concern,

First, special thanks to the City Council for their leadership in advancing important legislation to monitor, protect and grow the NYC tree canopy in an equitable way. This legislation directly advances the NYC Urban Forest Agenda and ensures a long-term plan for the urban forest.

I am the founder of Stickbulb, a NYC-based lighting manufacturer that makes high end, low-carbon light fixtures from locally salvaged wood. We think of the wood waste from construction, demolition, and urban forest maintenance in NYC as our supply chain. This mentality has naturally led us to become part of the Forest For All NYC Coalition, and to think more holistically about how our local economies can support and strengthen local ecologies. We're proud to be a part of Forest for All NYC (FFA), a coalition of over 90 organizations across business, nonprofit, conservation, and environmental justice sectors.

Stickbulb is in alliance with FFA, and supports both the Int 1066-2023 and 1065-2023 bills, which are of the utmost importance to the health, wealth, and longevity of NYC's urban forest. While Forest for All NYC supports Int 1065-2023, there are specific opportunities for improving its feasibility and efficacy, including that it:

1. Ensures DPR supported and resourced in planning, and has a co-lead(s) with broader jurisdictional authority as well as the time and funding to accomplish this important effort
2. Establishes a timeline for achieving 30 percent cover, ideally 2035
3. Ensures the plan explicitly accounts for and improves environmental justice, climate change, health, access, workforce, and addresses the full life cycle of trees, **seed to salvage** (which is especially important to my company's business model).

Thank you so much for taking the time to read this testimony, and for advancing this important legislation.

Onward,



Russell Greenberg
Stickbulb Founder/Creative Director



June 14, 2023

New York City Council Hearing on the Bills Int 1066-2023 and Int 1065-2023
Testimony By: Josephine A. Scalia, Board Member, The Forest Park Trust, Inc.

My name is Josephine Scalia, a board member of The Forest Park Trust, Inc., and a partner with Forest for All NYC coalition. I am sending this testimony on behalf of The Forest Park Trust and President Michael Palermo. We thank you for your leadership in introducing these bills that will support important legislation to monitor, safeguard and strengthen the NYC tree canopy and forests, which is so important to the well-being of all New Yorkers.

The Forest Park Trust is a non-profit organization founded in 1997. We work in partnership with NYC Parks to assist the Forest and Highland Park administration, in its effort to secure funding for both parks. The Trust supports the improvements to the landscaped and recreational areas; provides free family and youth programs and events; and finances seasonal staff to oversee free fitness classes, maintain our natural areas and community garden.

We are appreciative of the City Council's past support of the Play Fair program and The Forestry Management Framework (FMF) plan. We hope the council will persuade Mayor Adams to keep his campaign promise to increase the NYC Parks budget to up to one percent. Without the continued Council funding and legislative protection of our trees and forests, our struggle to maintain and achieve the 30% canopy cover that we need to battle the local effects of climate change and keep NYC healthy for its citizens will be impossible.

The trees and the canopies they create for us are living organisms. The Hidden Life of Trees, written by Peter Wohlleben, explains that trees feel, communicate and are part of the forest's social network. They behave like our human families. Tree parents live together, taking care of their offspring, sharing nutrients to those who are sick or struggling and even warn each other of danger. Our government makes sure our citizens are supported by special programs and legislation to protect them. As stewards of the planet, and in your capacity, representing the voices and needs of your constituents, don't you think the trees on our city streets and in our forests deserve this protection and representation as well?

We hope that the City Council will support these two new bills that will help NYC Park's consult with other organizations to create long term sustainability planning and an Urban Forest Master Plan for the conservation and care of our trees, so our park patrons can experience the full benefits of connecting to a forest in their own backyard and ease the local effects of climate change.

We want to especially thank City Councilwoman Joann Ariola, Councilwoman Lynn Schulman, Councilwoman Sandy Nurse and Councilman Robert F. Holden for their generosity and attention to Forest & Highland Parks.

Thank you all again for your leadership and commitment to NYC Parks.

June 13, 2023

The New York City Council
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

To The Committee on Parks and Recreation:

HOPE is a New York City nonprofit organization that empowers New Yorkers to build sustainable futures through comprehensive training, jobs, advancement and lifelong career support. We are incredibly grateful for the deep partnership of the New York City Council as historical funding partners through ATI, A Greener NYC, NYC Cleanup and other key initiatives.

With five programs that offer hands-on work experience focused on the green economy, we are committed to climate solutions while building a workforce that is prepared to tackle these challenges on a large scale. We would like to thank the Committee for hearing the bills under consideration and inviting testimony, as we believe these bills align with HOPE's aim for more job creation and opportunities for New Yorkers as well as create a cohesive NYC urban forest plan.

HOPE's involvement with Forest for All NYC continues to be a valued collaborative relationship that serves our objective of ensuring New Yorkers have both the knowledge and access to do the work that impacts their communities, as well as make lasting impact in tangible environmental solutions. Specifically, HOPE provides trainees (whom we pay for their hands-on work) to support invasive plant removal, tree planting, and tree maintenance - functions that impact the NYC Urban Forest Agenda. Because of our dedication in this objective, we support bills Int 1066-2023 and Int 1065-2023, along with bill Int 1065-2023 with the considerations of key impactful adjustments such as ensuring that the plan for implementation explicitly accounts for and improves workforce development and job creation, environmental justice, climate change, and addresses the full life cycle of trees, seed to salvage.

We again thank the City Council for their leadership in advancing important legislation to monitor, protect and grow the NYC tree canopy in an equitable way. HOPE aligns with the coalition's belief that passing these bills are good for the urban forest, good for New Yorkers' health and well-being, and essential to meeting Mayor Adam's recently announced PlaNYC 30% canopy goal citywide.

Yours faithfully,


Kendra Jones

Director of Bronx Programs, The HOPE Program

RE: NYC Council Meeting, Committee on Parks and Recreation, June 13, 2023

FROM: Urban Systems Lab, The New School

DATE: Jun 9, 2023

The Urban Systems Lab is an interdisciplinary research, design and practice space at The New School that provides knowledge and analysis for developing more equitable, resilient, and sustainable cities. We are a proud member of the Forest for All NYC consortium and have worked closely with members of The Nature Conservancy of New York and many organizations included in the effort for over a decade. Our work advances cutting edge science, data visualization, and computation to develop systemic solutions to social and environmental challenges driving inequity and injustice in urban areas. We believe nature-based solutions, especially urban forests, green spaces, and increased canopy coverage in cities can address a range of environmental and social hazards ranging from air pollution to extreme heat exposure, particularly for vulnerable and disadvantaged communities¹. And we are a member of Forest for All because we believe in the coalition's goal of achieving at least 30% canopy cover citywide in an equitable manner by 2035.

Our prior research has supported citywide efforts like the Million Trees initiative², advanced understanding of the benefits and distribution of green roofs³, and more recently a study on the use of greenspaces in NYC during the initial stages of the COVID-19 pandemic⁴. Our findings continue to show the multiple benefits that the urban forest, natural areas and greenspaces play for New Yorkers, as well as the potential savings these nature-based solutions can provide to the City ranging from cost-savings associated with stormwater mitigation⁵ to reductions in hospitalization rates due to extreme heat.

We support the passage of Int 1066-2023, which would require the office of long-term planning and sustainability to consider the role of trees, tree canopy, and vegetation in its long-term sustainability planning. Additionally, we support the passage of Int 1065-2023 which would require the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), in consultation with any other appropriate City Departments, State Agencies or Authority to create an Urban Forest Master

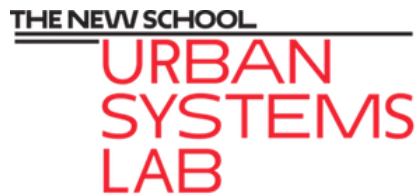
¹ Spotswood, E. N., Benjamin, M., Stoneburner, L., Wheeler, M. M., Beller, E. E., Balk, D., McPhearson, T., Kuo, M., & McDonald, R. I. (2021). Nature inequity and higher COVID-19 case rates in less-green neighbourhoods in the United States. *Nature Sustainability*, 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41893-021-00781-9>

² McPhearson, Timon, Michael Feller, Alexander Felson, Richard Karty, Jacqueline WT Lu, Matthew I Palmer, Tim Wenskus. 2016. "Assessing the effects of the urban forest restoration effort of MillionTreesNYC on the structure and functioning of New York City ecosystems," in *Urban Forests: Ecosystem Services and Management* (J. Blum, ed), Apple Academic Press

³ Treglia, M., McPhearson, T., Sanderson, E., Yetman, G., & Maxwell, E. (2022). Examining the distribution of green roofs in New York City through a lens of social, ecological, and technological filters. *Ecology and Society*, 27(3). <https://doi.org/10.5751/ES-13303-270320>

⁴ Lopez, B., Kennedy, C., Field, C., & McPhearson, T. (2021). Who benefits from urban green spaces during times of crisis? Perception and use of urban green spaces in New York City during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Urban Forestry & Urban Greening*, 127354. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ufug.2021.127354>

⁵ The Staten Island Bluebelt: A Case Study in Urban Stormwater Management by Dana Gumb, S. Mehrotra, and B. Henn, 2007.



Urban Systems Lab
79 Fifth Avenue, 16th Floor
New York, NY 10003
+1 212 229 2036
urbansystemslab.com

Plan which would protect and increase the City's urban forest to 30 percent canopy cover. We want to point out there are specific opportunities for improving the feasibility and efficacy of Int 1066-2023 by ensuring DPR is supported and resourced in planning, and has a co-lead(s) with broader jurisdictional authority as well as the time and funding to accomplish this important effort equitably. We also urge the Council to establish a timeline for achieving 30 percent cover, ideally 2035, and to adopt a plan that accounts for and improves environmental justice, climate change, health, access, workforce etc.

We thank the City Council for their leadership in advancing important legislation to monitor, protect and grow the NYC tree canopy in an equitable way. This legislation directly advances the NYC Urban Forest Agenda. Passing these bills are good for the urban forest, good for New Yorkers' health and well-being, and essential to meeting Mayor Adam's recently announced PlaNYC 30% canopy goal citywide.

Thank you for your consideration and please reach out if you have any questions or concerns,

Sincerely,

CHRISTOPHER KENNEDY
THE NEW SCHOOL

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, URBAN SYSTEMS LAB, 79 FIFTH AVE, 16TH FL, NEW YORK, NY 10003
urbansystemslab.com @USL_NYC kennedyc@newschool.edu +1.212.229.2036

To: City Council

Re: Bills Int 1065-2023 and 1066-2023 for the NYC Urban Forest

Thank you to the Council for hearing these important bills and inviting testimonials. My name is Wendy Andringa, I am the founder of Assemblage Landscape Architecture, based in Brooklyn, NY, and we are a coalition member of Forest For All NYC. I am also a board member of the American Society of Landscape Architects NYC Chapter, a volunteer urban tree steward and citizen tree pruner.

Last week's air quality emergency was a reminder of how fragile our forests are, and the legislation at hand is of utmost importance. Our stealth and silent urban forest goes under-appreciated for all of the services and benefits it gives us, and these bills can help make change.

Intro 1066 will consider the role of trees, tree canopy, and vegetation in NYC's long-term sustainability planning, and Intro 1065 supports the creation of an Urban Forest Master Plan which would be aimed at protecting and increasing the City's urban forest to 30 percent canopy cover.

For Intro 1065, may I respectfully suggest taking the following points into consideration:

1. Ensure that NYC Parks is supported with time and funding (1% FOR PARKS) to do this work, and has a co-lead with broad jurisdictional authority.
2. Establish a timeline for achieving 30 percent cover, ideally by 2035.
3. Ensure the plan improves environmental justice, is responsive to climate change, improves access to canopy for all New Yorkers, and enables green workforce potential.
4. Ensure the plan improves maintenance of NYC's existing valuable trees and accounts for the full life cycle of all trees.

As a member of the Forest For All NYC coalition, Assemblage supports both bills and is committed to ensuring this important legislation becomes law. Thank you for your consideration.

Best,



Wendy Andringa, RLA

Principal

Assemblage Landscape Architecture, DPC

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF THE URBAN FOREST MASTER PLANS (INT 1066-2023 & INT 1065-2023) BY MELISSA ELSTEIN: WEST 80S NEIGHBORHOOD ASSN. & LOVE YOUR STREET TREE DAY

June 13, 2023

Dear New York City Council Members, Committee on Parks & Recreation, Chair Shekar Krishnan,

Thank you for this opportunity to comment with regards to Int 1066 & 1065-2023, and thank you Councilmembers Gale Brewer and Erik Bottcher for the introduction of these bills that intend to protect and grow our NYC urban forest!

My name is Melissa Elstein and I am a cofounding Board member of the West 80s Neighborhood Association (a local NYC nonprofit and all-volunteer organization). As part of our environmental and quality of life initiatives, we created our “Love Your Street Tree Day” coalition in order to host large community events that focus on proper tree stewardship, street tree issues and benefits, and provide free tree care tools and gifts to our guests. At our events, on our website and YouTube channel, we also strive to bring awareness to the benefits of such green infrastructure for decreasing stormwater overflow, reducing the heat island effect and cleaning the air, improving human health, helping wildlife, and increasing foot traffic to local businesses. We realized that after the completion of the Million Trees Plan started under Mayor Bloomberg, just planting trees was not sufficient. These expensive new trees needed proper care in order to survive often harsh NYC conditions and New Yorkers needed education regarding street tree issues especially. Our events have attracted hundreds of attendees each year from around the city. Having trained with Trees NY and the NYC Parks Department, trainings which helped to inspire our own events, we were thrilled to be invited to join The NY Nature Conservancy’s “Forest for All NYC” Coalition joining other organizations and groups that also advocate and care for NYC’s urban forest.

My organizations and I commend the NYC Council for the introduction of these bills, and we urge their passage into law. We also thank Mayor Adams and his administration for the inclusion of the 30% tree canopy in the updated PlaNYC. We hope that the culmination of that goal will be realized by 2035.

Thank you.

Melissa Elstein, Secretary and Co-Founder
West 80s Neighborhood Association
PO Box 732
NY, NY 10024
www.west80s.org
www.loveyourstreetreeday.com

15 June 2023

Dear NYC Council Committee on Parks and Recreation,

I am Dr. Amy Berkov, a member of the Biology Faculty at the City College of New York, and a 44-year resident of the East Village. I'm sorry that I was not able to testify during the committee meeting, but am sending a few notes. First, I am thrilled to see your recognition of the critical importance of our urban forest, in terms of the ecosystem services that are of value both to people, and to the other species with whom we share the planet. Every grey pixel on a Google map shows a place where humans have out-competed everything that lived there before. Collectively, those grey pixels represent a loss of the permeable ground and vegetation that enable rainwater to percolate through the soil and enter roots—fueling the processes that plants use to sequester carbon—and keeping carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere. Mature trees, with their extensive root systems, obviously make disproportionate contributions to this critical process. They also are the trees most likely to be removed from our landscapes (with misleading arguments about how they are nearing the ends of their life spans). I am especially pleased to see that legislation is being introduced to monitor, expand, and care for our urban forests. Because of the *special importance of mature trees*:

1) The city should not rely exclusively on trunk “caliper-inch” replacement rules in tree removals.

According to the NYC Rules Governing Tree Replacement: “In no case shall the number of replacement trees equal less than one caliper inch of replacement tree for each caliper inch of tree removed”

(<https://rulesofnyc.readthedocs.io/en/latest/c38/#chapter-5-rules-governing-tree-replacement>). Caliper-inch replacement rules do not reflect the importance of large canopies in capturing carbon from the atmosphere; thereby addressing the root causes of climate change. In recognition of the important ecosystem services provided by mature trees, AG James made the following comment in response to the ESCR DEIS (10.0-119: comment 160): “the City should evaluate and use additional metrics, such as tree canopy volume, to develop an appropriate tree replacement plan, rather than simply looking at the number and trunk diameter of the existing and replacement trees.”

2) The city needs a dedicated arborist to care for the safety and well-being of veteran trees.

Most of our street and park trees have potential life spans that are much longer than they will ever reach in NYC (bald cypress and Douglas fir, for instance, can each reach over 1,000 years). Tree life spans could often be extended, and safe conditions

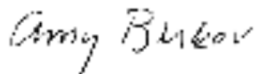
maintained, with appropriate care. We need a shift in paradigm: away from the model of 3” replacement, like buying a new piece of furniture, to a model that acknowledges trees as living beings that provide important services, and are parts of complex networks. Most likely, this will only happen if the city has an inhouse arborist dedicated to the care and maintenance of our largest and oldest trees. Veteran trees should not be removed without the approval of an arborist who can be trusted to mitigate potential safety issues *and* advocate for the trees.

3) Because we are not the only species that depend on our urban forests, we need better biodiversity education. The city should have a Biodiversity Czar.

Many people living in NYC do not fully appreciate the rich biodiversity of our local parks and gardens, and don’t realize how much we depend on a functional ecosystem; not just for the ecosystem services mentioned above, but for pollination, nutrient-cycling, etc. Biodiversity needs an advocate within the city administration. Land use decisions that involve the loss of canopy should not be made solely on the recommendations of engineers. The perspectives of public health advocates and environmental scientists should have equal weight. Students, their teachers—our policy-makers and future policy makers—need to achieve environmental literacy, and develop more appreciation for local biodiversity. This has to come through personal experience. We need to support K-12 teachers with outdoors education. We need internships, and professional development for parks personnel. **We need an Environmental Boot-camp for policy-makers, and a Biodiversity Czar, to represent the interests of the non-human residents of NYC.**

Thank you for your advocacy.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Amy Berkov
CCNY Biology Department
aberkov@ccny.cuny.edu

I thank the City Council for their leadership in advancing important legislation to monitor, protect and grow the NYC tree canopy in an equitable way. This legislation directly advance the NYC Urban Forest Agenda. My name is Andrew Reinmann and I am an assistant professor at the CUNY Advanced Science Research Center and at Hunter College. CUNY is *the* public university of New York City and with an incredibly diverse student body of more than 270,000 it has also been one of the largest drivers of socioeconomic mobility in the U.S. My areas of expertise include forest ecology, urban ecology, and carbon cycle science and my research has included forests of New York City since I joined CUNY in 2017. For my courses, we use the city's forests and other natural areas extensively for educational purposes and as a critical resource for training the next generation of practitioners and scientists. Because CUNY has very limited funding and we largely serve lower and middle income communities, our students have few opportunities for out-of-classroom learning opportunities, particularly in the sciences. By having healthy forests we can use as our classrooms, we can provide our students with invaluable learning and training experiences that would be greatly compromised should the health of theses systems be compromised. I have served as an Action Team co-lead for Forest for all NYC for several years now and I have been volunteering for this position because I am keenly aware of the importance and utility of our >10,000 acres of forests as critical infrastructure, as mediators of environmental and public health, and as a key component of environmental justice. While our forests provide innumerable benefits to our city and enhance everyone's quality of life, they also face numerous challenges including invasive species, pollution, climate change, etc. Without proper vision, attention, and resources The Greatest City will imperil one of its greatest resources. The proposed bills will create a much-needed NYC urban forest plan, vital tree canopy monitoring, and the long overdue consideration of trees in NYC's long-term planning.

I am proud to be part of the Forest for All NYC coalition, along with its over 90 participating organizations. Collectively, we work tirelessly to educate New Yorkers and its leaders about the importance of the urban forest. We're humbled to see these newly introduced bills are actions directly from our Agenda. We have had many successes in the short time we have been in action: inaugural City of Forest Day, all five borough presidents and a majority of Council members supporting the coalition's goal of achieving at least 30% canopy cover citywide in an equitable manner by 2035, Mayor's inclusion of a 30% canopy goal in the latest updated PlaNYC, new legislation, etc.

I write to express both my concern for the future of NYC's incredible forest resource and encouragement that the legislature is considering Int 1066-2023 and Int 1065-2023. I urge you to pass these bills as they represent a substantial step forward in our ability to preserve the truly incredible and globally unique urban forest resource that we have here in NYC.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andy Reinmann". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Andrew Reinmann, PhD
Assistant Professor

To Whom it May Concern,

Please give trees in NYC the importance it deserves. The number and health of trees should be high on the city's list of priorities because of the many positive health effects they can have on a community. Additionally, they can have a calming presence, as well as letting others know that the community is loved. Take the goal of having a 30% canopy of the city seriously and continue to monitor our progress.

Thank you,

Caroline Boyle
8th Ave

Brooklyn, NY. 11215

Testimony for the NYC Council Committee on Parks and Recreation
Dr. Daniel Katz, School of Integrative Plant Sciences, Cornell University
June 13, 2023

My name is Daniel Katz, and I am a Senior Research Associate and incoming Assistant Professor at Cornell University. My lab conducts research on health-relevant interactions between plants and people with a focus on urban trees. This includes several projects in New York City, including on how trees reduce ambient temperature and their potential to reduce heat-related morbidity during extreme heat events. I am also a proud member of the Forests for All NYC coalition.

First, I would like to extend my gratitude to the City Council and Committee Chair's leadership on growing and protecting New York's urban trees. Today, I would like to testify in support of Int. 1065-2023 and Int. 1066-2023.

Urban trees provide extensive benefits for New Yorkers, including reducing ambient temperatures through both shading and transpiration. The cooling effects of trees are especially important during extreme heat events ('heat waves'). Climate change is expected to increase extreme heat event duration, frequency, and intensity, which will have public health consequences including heat-related deaths and hospitalizations. Groups that are particularly vulnerable to heat include older aged adults, people with multiple comorbidities, individuals who work outside, and those disadvantaged by low socioeconomic status.

Nationally, and in New York City, there is a disparity in tree cover among neighborhoods, with lower income areas of color having lower tree cover and higher temperatures during extreme heat events. Increasing tree canopy cover in New York City to 30% could help protect the most vulnerable New Yorkers from some of the effects of climate change. Int. 1065-2023 and Int. 1066-2023 are important steps towards accomplishing this goal, and I additionally advocate for the Urban Forest Master Plan to explicitly contain these environmental justice and climate change related concerns. I further advocate that the Department of Parks and Recreation be provided with the funding required to accomplish this important effort.

Thank you once again for your efforts to ensure that all New Yorkers receive the many benefits provided by urban trees.

Sincerely,



Daniel Katz
Sr. Research Associate
School of Integrative Plant Science
Cornell University

Good morning, City Councilpersons,

My name is Fay D. Hill a resident of Springfield Gardens, Queens for over 46 years. I am the chairperson for Parks & Environment Committee for Community Board 13 for over eight years and the District Leader for Assembly District 31B that covers Rosedale, Springfield Gardens and part of Far Rockway.

I am submitting my testimony via electronic measured and would have loved to be facing you via zoom or in person but because of conflicts of timing I am submitting my written testimony on behalf our Parks here in New York City and especially in Southeast Queens where our parks have been ignored by several city council administrations for many years and because of our advocacy to City Council you are now decided that parks are a vital energy and we have all seen the need for parks around the city. COV19 proved my point.

We understand that the mayor is planning on cutting funds on Parks. We cannot allow the reduction of funds for our parks and with the increase of migrants and refugees New Yorkers will need more open space to enjoy their parks as well as an outlet to ease mental stress and anxiety that is on the rise. **WE NEED OUR PARKS AND OPEN SPACES.**

The following bills should also be added to my testimony:

[Int 1065-2023](#) Require NYC Parks to create an Urban Forest Master Plan aimed at protecting and increasing the urban forest.

[Int 1066-2023](#) Require the office of long-term planning and sustainability to consider the role of trees, tree canopy, and vegetation in its long-term sustainability planning.

NYC Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) manages 53.5% of the total urban forest canopy in the city.

Despite its laudable efforts, DPR is chronically underfunded, particularly for management of the urban forest.

New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) needs baselined and sufficient investment in the regular maintenance of the urban forest and parks sustainable. More PEP office to manned our parks for safety. Maintenance workers for the upkeep of our parks is mandatory.

I urgently ask the City Council and the Mayor to make Department of Parks one of their priorities in your budget for 2023/2024. PARKS ARE NECESSARY AND WELL AS HOUSING.

Respectfully submitted,

Fay D. Hill

To whom it may concern,

Hello! I am Francis Williams and writing on behalf of the New York City urban forest asking the city to take in consideration trees and vegetation to be included in long term city planning! New York City has some of the most beautiful green spaces I've ever seen in any city in America and I would truly, along with many New Yorkers, love to keep the city green, and also protect neighborhoods and citizens from the effects of our ever changing climate! Thank you for your consider

Best,

Francis Williams

June 15, 2023

Joan Reutershan
South Portland Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11217-1302

RE: Int 1065-2023 and Int 1066-2023

Dear New York City Councilmembers,

Supporting New York City tree canopy, as do the two bills mentioned above, could not be more urgent for human and environmental well-being in NYC at this time:

- Last week's wildfires in Canada brought the Air Quality Index in New York City to astronomical numbers not seen since recording began in the 1960s. Citizens were forced to stay inside, wear masks if they went out, and those who had to work outdoors exposed themselves to dangers we don't even know the extent of as yet.
- Construction dust and particulates are prevalent in densely populated NYC areas, including where I live near Downtown Brooklyn.
- Air pollution near highways and last-mile depots, especially in economically under-resourced areas, is extreme and dangerous to health.
- The last 8 years have been the hottest on record.
- The City declared a climate emergency in 2019.

Scientific Research shows the benefits of trees, especially mature tree canopy, for the urban population and environment. **Trees clean and cool the air, absorb carbon dioxide and other gaseous pollutants, they trap particulates which enter the lungs and cause or aggravate asthma.** By providing shade they give respite in the summer heat and also lower energy lower electric bills. The NYC Parks Department website cites actual dollar value to health and economy provided by trees. In addition, trees absorb storm water runoff, they harbor birds and urban wildlife. There are mental health

benefits to the presence of trees: Trees are calming, lower blood pressure and relieve anxiety. Parks are meeting places where social relations are enhanced, offering spaces for —family traditions, meetings, recreation, exercise and rest. The New York City Public Design Commission has published a booklet entitled *Streetscapes for Wellness*, in which greenspaces and trees play a major role.

In particular I will cite the need to preserve and protect mature trees in the Northwest corner of Fort Greene Park, Brooklyn, slated for removal by the Parks Department itself in an ill-conceived Parks Without Borders capitol project conceived in 2016 under the De Blasio administration. I am a member of The Friends of Fort Greene Park, and we protest this planned deforestation in the NW corner of the Park that is one part of a 24 Million Dollar project to renovate and redesign this beloved Park. The Park is located in the North of Fort Greene, with NYCHA Walt Whitman and Ingersoll houses directly adjacent, residential buildings along with Brooklyn Hospital to the West, enormous steel and glass luxury highrises of Downtown Brooklyn close by, and Brownstone streets to the east and south. The Friends of Fort Greene Park support most of the plan for the redesign of the Park but given the built and social environment context cited above, and the growing climate crisis, we most strenuously object to the felling of dozens of mature trees that create a magnificent canopy extending from Myrtle Ave at saint Edward's to the Prison Ship Martyrs monument at the top of fort Greene Park. We want to preserve the greenspaces of the grassy mounds which generations or residents have enjoyed. The plan calls for a hardscape plaza, which will become a heat island in the summer and replacement of mature trees with 3 calipur saplings, which will need decades to develop the environmental benefits of the trees already there, most of which are in good condition and have a long life span ahead of them. This deforestation must not happen.

For all these reasons I ask you to support these bills Int 1065-2023 and Int 1066-2023, which will hopefully protect and enhance the tree canopy we need in New York City for our human and environmental well-being. Thank you.

Joan Reutershan, ## South Portland Ave, Brooklyn NY 11217

Written Testimony:

Judith Dahill, ### West 24th Street, NY, NY

I was able to attend the New York City Council's Committee on Parks virtual hearing June 13 at 10 am about NYC's tree canopy. It was brilliant and amazing CM Krishna ran the meeting like a Rock Star. Dream Team CM Erik Bottcher and CM Gale Brewer are sponsoring bills to have data on trees and the health of our city's trees and also our residence. So many people were tree huggers and doing great things to improve the air, quality, the natural habitat for our urban animals, and for our all mental health.

I wanted to submit written testimony, because after three hours I had to go to another meeting about UFT Retiree Healthcare and was not able to testify about the problem of property owners and businesses who do not take care of the tree pits just like they take care of the property: ice on the sidewalk, snow removal, and many other disinformation about liability for taking care of trees on sidewalks etc.

I have tried to find out from the NYC Parks Department guidelines about the property owner and businesses responsibility in taking care of the New York City street trees. It is a very muddy explanation that needs to be clearly written out so it can understood.

I live at Penn South in Chelsea and my coop building with 14 Buildings say that the street trees are the New York City's Parks Dept's responsibility and if they touch the tree they going to be liable if a branch falls down or if somebody trips on a roots?!

Needless to say they have the skills, they have the watering capability, the mulch capability, the planting capability, and it just seems crazy that my coop building maintenance and management don't want to support the street trees that surround our building. They do amazing job on our property trees and we are even exploring sustainable plants that require less watering, but to walk two feet to water street trees that need help seems to be a liability issue or so they claim.

I have been trying to get them to help the trees for years, and I am so grateful for all the new 7 new trees that were planted on my street 24th streets and in our neighborhood, but I am frightened to think that the trees will struggle without the proper watering, especially in the first three years.

Thank you for your bills and all of your support for our trees in New York City and for the hard work you do for the public service of our great city

Lucy Koteen ✓
138 Lafayette Av
Brooklyn, Ny 11238
lucy.koteen@gmail.com
718-938-3935

June 12, 2023

#1065 This bill would require the Department of Parks and Recreation, in consultation with any other appropriate City Departments, State Agencies or Authorities, and any interested non-governmental parties, to create an Urban Forest Master Plan which would be aimed at protecting and increasing the City's urban forest. It would be aimed at increasing tree and vegetation cover across the City and requires the establishment of goals to expand and protect the urban forest. The plan would be required to be updated every five years. It would also require the City to collect LIDaR data to monitor the effectiveness of the plan.

#1066 This bill would require the office of long-term planning and sustainability to consider the role of trees, tree canopy, and vegetation in its long-term sustainability planning.

Of course tree canopy and the role of trees should be considered in all planning, long and short term. Every scientist has cited tree preservation as an important aspect of the response to global warming.

I have long contended that there is a need for a separate agency with an Urban Forest Master **not** under the Parks Department. The Parks Department has a history of deforestation and accepting the City's plans to destroy the Urban Forest.

-Did the Parks Dept raise objections when the City planned to remove close to 1000 trees in East River Park?

-Did the Parks Dept raise objections when the city and state allowed 2000 trees to be removed from the Graniteville Wetlands in order for a BJs and a parking lot to replace it? And as projected, Graniteville, a low income community, was flooded, after a large rain incident.

-Did the Parks Dept raise objections to the 114 mature trees currently being removed from Wagner Park?

-Did you know that the Parks Dept cut down 40-50 healthy trees in Manhattan Beach a couple of years ago, costing 3 million? What did that cost in health effects?

But I will focus on the project in my neighborhood.

-The Parks Dept has plans to remove 78 mature trees in Fort Greene Park and to replace the North West section with a hardscape 43-foot plaza without any regard to the increased heat index, increased asthma in NYCHA this will cause, the reduction of carbon sequestration that will occur, the impact on the over 100 bird species in Fort Greene Park, and the unnecessary expense of this \$21 million project at a time of a shrinking budget for parks around the city.

What is this plan even about? We had to sue the city twice to read an unredacted report which confirmed that the Parks Dept lied to the public. And they repeatedly lied about the health of the trees in the park. We had to sue the city and won, to force them to perform an environmental assessment. They had claimed that this project, which radically changes the North West corner of this historic Frederick Olmstead park, is nothing more than maintenance! They claimed that they had many public engagement meetings about the park. Not one person said please cut down all our shade trees in the area. No, the opposite was said. This is a tactic we are so familiar with-the holding of the public engagement meeting that always concludes with the original proposal. You are familiar with this trick, right?

The Draft EAS that some of us have read despite the Parks Dept denying the public access to it, does not address one environmental impact.

To clear the sight lines to the monument from the street. That is the main reason given for **deforesting** Fort Greene Park at the North West section of the park, which is across from a large NYCHA complex. One of the principles of Olmstead was one of providing meandering paths and discovery in the park. This Parks Without Borders remodeling prioritizes monument sightlines over mature healthy oxygen creating and carbon sequestering trees!.

There are many more accounts of unnecessary tree removal throughout the city. Look into it.

As stated on the website of the Parks Dept -

A large healthy tree removes almost 70 times more air pollution each year than a small newly planted tree.

Look at the i-tree accounts of how much each tree gives us in environmental and economic savings.

Each time they remove large mature trees, we are told that the Parks Dept will plant the same amount or more new trees. The claim that new trees can replace 60 foot trees with massive canopies that will take 20 to 30 years to reach this size, if they even survive, is outrageous. Our children, our seniors, our birds, do not have 30 years to wait for shade and oxygen. Do not let the Parks Dept and the City get away with the arborcide they have planned in Fort Greene Park. The first obligation of this committee should be to protect the trees we have now. Do not place an Urban Forest Master under the control of the Parks Dept. Place it in a new agency that understands the benefits of large mature trees with large canopies.

The Parks Without Borders plan prioritizes monument sightlines and an empty corridor over mature, shade giving, oxygen generating trees. Please do not remove mature, healthy trees. Our summers are getting increasingly hotter and we depend on the tall trees to help cool us and create oxygen. There is no need to spend money on creating a new entrance. A ramp can be added to the existing entrance on the north side of the park without tearing down the beautiful stone wall and removing trees. See the ramp that was added to the Willoughby Ave entrance. There is no need to spend money on a new entrance to the big-kids' playground. Saplings planted elsewhere in the park in no way compensate for the removal of mature trees. Keep the lovely tree canopy at the base of the monument as it is – just replace the broken concrete and replace the stones missing from the mounds. Children and adults use the mounds for free play, exercise, and a place to sit and cool off on a sunny day. Fort Greene Park is our refuge. Do not destroy it.

Thank you.
Maria Ferrari

7 June 2023
City Council
New York City

Dear Councilmembers,

I am writing in full support of two proposed pieces of legislation that would amend the City Charter, increasing New York City's tree canopy by at least 30%, implement an Urban Forest Plan for the city and make sure that all future long range planning includes the Urban Forest and vegetation.

Trees do a great deal more than just beautify our streets and parks. They sequester carbon, drink up rainwater (thus preventing erosion and flooding), add oxygen to the air and provide shade for us in the hot summers. They are also home to song birds and many other species.

It has also been proven that neighborhoods with a significant percentage of tree cover also have less crime. Community gardens bring neighbors together and provide exposure to nature for city residents. In short, adding more trees and vegetation to our urban landscapes has benefits both immediate and long term.

Thank you for your consideration. I hope you and all your families and staff will stay safe and be well in this terrible air we now have.

Sincerely,

Noëlle King

Master Gardner, Tree Warden graduate, Volunteer NYC Parks Dept.
Super Steward Care Captain for Street Trees, Volunteer Bruce's Garden
NYC and all-round nature lover

Park Terrace East
New York NY 10034

On behalf of the entire Neyman family, the patients she took care of, their parents, and the many other people who benefitted from my mother's commitment to justice, education and quality health care for all, we wanted to thank the City of New York for choosing to name a street after my late mother, Dr. Paula Neyman.

My mother would have hoped that her achievements as a doctor after enduring the horrors of concentration camp will serve as a model to other women and girls, immigrants, and people who have been oppressed.

Her contribution, alongside those of the many others being honored today, stands as a testimony to how much immigrants have contributed to New York City. Contrary to the misguided and misinformed xenophobia that rages in this country, immigrants are what make us great.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarena Neyman
Daughter of Dr. Paula Neyman

June 15, 2023

To Whom it May Concern,

I write as a Mom, a daughter a sister and a neighbor who lives in Crown Heights and supports trees in NYC. Trees serve as vital mitigators of the impacts of climate change, absorbing stormwater and lowering temperatures on dangerously hot days.

I support the pair of bills intro-1065 and intro-1066 requiring the city Parks Department to create a master plan focused on protecting and increasing the urban forest and mandating the city consider the role of trees in long-term sustainability planning.

The Mayor should also follow through on his commitment to put 1% of the budget towards parks. That will help us attain the goal of 30% canopy by 2035.

Sincerely,
Susan Boyle
Dean St.
Brooklyn, NY 11238
Tengrandfab@gmail.com

I am writing in support of the legislation advancing the NYC Urban Forest agenda and to submit the following suggestions:

I would recommend that any amendment to the City Charter that would require “the consideration of trees, tree canopy, and vegetation in long term planning” only encourage and provide incentives to plant street and backyard trees that are of a height that do not post a major threat to the lives and property in the city. I live in Park Slope where there now are some street and backyard trees that are much higher than the neighborhood’s typical row houses. Most of these trees are very old and are in risk of falling due as a result of their age, disease and major storms.

Currently, The Department of Parks allows large street trees, which can grow higher than 50 feet, to be planted in the city. I think that this is inadvisable. I would recommend is that only what the Parks Department defines as small and intermediate trees, which grow no higher that 35 feet, to be planted on our city’s streets and in its backyards in order to achieve its worthy canopy goals.

I also would recommend that any requirement that the City, to produce an Urban Forest Plan and periodically monitor canopy towards a 30% canopy goal, ensure that the backyards and the front yards of the City’s buildings have a role in contributing this objective. This should include prohibitions that do not allow buildings to have fully paved backyards requirements that a specific minimum proportion of all backyards and front yards include plantings that contain trees and/or gardens. Incentives and penalties could be established to aid in achieving this objective.

In my neighborhood, fully paved front. Yards backyards are commonplace. Many backyards are sizable measuring 20 X 50 feet. While some have gardens, many do not. The backyards of some buildings have drains that are connected to the City’s sewage system. While some front yards, which usually measure about 15 x 20 feet, have plantings. Most do not.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1065/1066 Res. No. 3

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: EMILY MAXWELL

Address: 322 8TH AVE

I represent: THE NATURE CONSERVANCY

Address: 322 8TH AVE

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1065/1066 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 6/13/2023

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: FRED WASS / WILD ONES LONG ISLAND

Address: P.O. BOX 846, BELLMORE NY

I represent: WILD ONES LONG ISLAND CHAPTER

Address: SAME

**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: DAVID SHANKLEY

Address: W 24 ST

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1065+1066 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 6-13-23

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Emily Walker

Address: 1234 5th Ave., NY, NY

I represent: Natural Areas Conservancy

Address: _____

Please complete **THE COUNCIL** *Sergeant-at-Arms*
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1065 1066 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: JOSEPH CHARAP

Address: 500 25th STREET, BROOKLYN 11232

I represent: GREEN-WOOD CEMETERY

Address: 11

Please complete **THE COUNCIL** *Sergeant-at-Arms*
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1065+1066 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Apni Kishnar

Address: 90 West Broadway

I represent: City Hall Park Conservancy

Address: 90 West Broadway

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: 6/13/2023

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ryan Mahoney

Address: 271 W 144 St, 4D NY NY 10020

I represent: Gotham Bat Conservancy

Address: 271 W 144 St, 4D NY NY 10020

**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: 6/13/2023

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Nicholas Gratti

Address: IVING PL, BROOKLYN NY 11235

I represent: Horticultural Society of NY

Address: 148 W 37th St, 13th Fl New York, NY, 10018

**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: CHRISSEY WORD

Address: 830 Fifth Ave, NYC 10029

I represent: City Parks Foundation

Address: 830 5th Ave, NYC 10079

**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: Morgan Monacop

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. 1065 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Melba Korman

Address: Johnson Ave, Bronx

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: 6/13/23

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Alia Soomro

Address: _____

I represent: NY League of Conservation Voters

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: 6/12/2023

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Daphne Ludi

Address: NYC MOCEJ

I represent: NYC MOCEJ

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: 6/13/23

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jennifer Greenfeld

Address: NYC Parks

I represent: Deputy Commissioner of

Address: Environ + Planning

**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: 6/17/23

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Matt Drury

Address: NYC Parks

I represent: Dir of Gov't Relations

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: 6/13/23

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ben Osborne

Address: NYC Parks

I represent: Assistant Commissioner of

Address: Forestry & Horticulture

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1066/1065-2023 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 6/13/23

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: SARAH BALISTRERI

Address: 92nd St Jackson Heights 11372

I represent: Trees New York

Address: 100 Gold

**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: 6/13/23

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Maria Larson

Address: NYC Parks

I represent: Assistant Commissioner of Environ-

Address: Planning

**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: 6/13/23

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Lucy Koteen

Address: 138 Lafayette Av

I represent: Friends of Post Greene Park

Address: 138 Lafayette A

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. 1065 & 66 Res. No. 1

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ERIC GOLDSTEIN

Address: _____

I represent: NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL

Address: 40 WEST 20 ST NY NY

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: Katie Dewey Horowitz

Address: 86 KENY AVE

I represent: NORTH BROOKLYN PARKS ALLIANCE

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: June 13, 2022

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: JACK BOURBONKES

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: PROTECTORS PINE OUTLOOK

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